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ABSTRACT

Although some social scientists have recognized the conflict and duality of career and family roles, few researchers have examined the consequences of balancing working women's multiple roles. Studies reveal that professional men and women appear to comprehend the meaning and implications of the "Superwoman," a woman caught in the triple bind of the needs and demands for achievement, personal satisfaction, and family commitments. The accumulation of roles women take on as life alternatives increase constitutes barriers to occupational success. Women administrators in higher education (N=68) described a "Superwoman," and then indicated how they coped with anxiety, stress, tension and time management. Many of their perceptions, ideas, strategies, background ideologies and family relationships were similar across the three age groups surveyed. Activity patterns were characterized by a type of cooperation, team effort, creativity and concentration which facilitated the development of leadership characteristics. The composite "Superwoman" shows ego strength; self confidence necessary to maintain and balance multiple roles; poise; and social responsiveness. (Author/BMW)

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SUPERWOMAN: MS. OR MYTH ©

A STUDY OF ROLE OVERLOAD

A REPORT TO THE NATIONAL

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Dr. Joan P. Bean
Dr. Brunetta R. Wolfman

September 1979

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Can women have "it" all? This question appears more and more frequently in the popular press, at social science research meetings, and on the run with professional women. The "it" includes the pain, pleasure and power built into occupying the executive suite, the boudoir and the children's room -- a balancing act that requires a superhuman effort. The opening question suggests the barriers confronting careers of women may be significantly different from those historically considered by sociologists, economists, and psychologists. Although some social scientists have recognized the conflict and the duality of career and family roles, few researchers have examined the consequences of balancing working women's multiple roles.

As Freidan (1963) asserted that women's absence in world affairs was the problem without a name, we were attempting to develop a working definition of the superwoman. Although this popularized term has been used by the media to describe the career woman who "does everything" successfully, the social science research literature contains only peripheral references to the superwoman. (Liss, 1975; Schumck, 1975)

Perhaps the super-career-woman-wife-and-mother has replaced the supermom role of the 1950's. Bart (1970) described the negative and pathological consequences of being the supermom, the perfect wife/mother. Bart asserts that the middle age subjects believed "the most important roles for women in our society are wife and mother." The psychological depression seen in this sample of mature women had it's antecedents in specific female socialization patterns. Women whose lives were bound up in fulfilling the goals and aspirations of husband and children, exhibited low self esteem and low self confidence. The culture presented a double message: one that encouraged women to be self sacrificing for the good of the family and at the same time devalued the occupation of the housewife. Where Bart found a neurotic over involvement in one role leads to severe depression in women, the consequences of the multiplicity of roles is not known.

A search of the social science literature indicates a dearth of theoretical and empirical work on the superwoman. Professional men and women appear to intuitively comprehend the meaning and implications of the superwoman, a woman caught in the triple bind of the needs and demands for achievement, personal satisfaction and family commitments. Some professional colleagues have suggested that being a superwoman, adding role upon role, may be the only way to maintain a harmonious marriage and to have a career. Popu-

lar writers have suggested that while the personal effect of adding role upon role is exhaustion and withdrawal, the occupational and organizational structures remain undisturbed.

The superwoman is not an issue for women only, though the specific conflicts relate to women's roles, not to men's roles. Our society continues to place a higher value on male roles than on female roles. Black and white women alike are struggling with inequality. Carroll (1973) describes the tacit formulae followed by Black women in academic administration who wish to reduce the inequities and succeed in a man's (both Black and white) world:

> You must be better qualified than the man. You must be more articulate. You must be more aggressive. You must have more stamina to face inevitable setbacks. You must have more patience, since you will advance more slowly. Above all, you must remain feminine and not threatening.
>
> (Carroll, 1973:182)

Carroll asserts that these dicta are shared by both Black and white women. Blacks have the added dictum, "They must also be better than white women." (Carroll, 1973:183) Lewis (1977) elaborates this issue by arguing that institutionalized barriers overburden the Black career woman relative to white career women. Our research design included a sample of Black and white career women.

Bailyn (1974) illustrates the areas of conflict and contradictions built into juggling the roles of family and career. The discontinuities which exist between home and work are: 1) the communal and family values of nurturance, cooperation, and support are not transferable to highly competitive occupations which demand aggressiveness, discipline, and conformity; 2) sharp decision making on the job differs from shared decisions in families; 3) seasonal rhythms at home (school holidays, entertaining, summer vacations) are replaced by a continuous level of activity at work and 4) social relationships in communities are broader than those subtly circumscribed by the administrative organization chart. Those women who emphasize the interpersonal aspect of their lives might be considered less professional than their colleagues by employers. Women who focus on their careers are often seen as ruthless, emotionally frigid and driving.

There are personal descriptions of the antecedents and consequences of combining career and family in women's autobiographies — Margaret Mead, Lillian Hellman, Lillian Gilbraith and Hortense Powdermaker. In describing an antecedent, Gibbs (1974) writes one

must believe that ". . .every woman has the potential to be superwoman if she is just motivated enough . . . only then can she successfully combine all female roles without conflict or guilt." (Gibbs, 1974:25) No one, to date, has assessed the human costs of adding career roles onto family roles with the increased risk of stress and uncertainty associated with occupational achievement.

The literature on adult development is remarkably sparse in its analysis of women's career development. Hodgkinson (1974) cited this notable deficiency in a paper focused on the development of male faculty and administrators in higher education. Levinson (1978) chose to study adult male development but suggested the importance of subsequent studies of female development. In Vaillant's (1977) longitudinal study of Harvard graduates a "most serious limitation" is noted, that of omitting women and minorities from the research. Although women have moved into the labor market, the data centers on quantitative analysis not the quality of women's lives.

Women may be experiencing some of the same role conflicts men are experiencing, but there is little evidence that role conflict or role strain exists when role expectations are not mutual. (Yorburg and Arafat, 1975) They assert that feelings of frustration or of "being pulled in opposite directions in the performance of the role exists in role conflict." Generally, role conflict occurs when economic, intellectual, physical or emotional resources are inadequate or inappropriate for performing a role; when the demands of two or more roles are incompatible; when role definitions are lacking or ambiguous or when the role prescribes inconsistent or contradictory values or behavior. (Yorburg and Arafat, 1975:136-136) Yorburg and Arafat conclude by noting the existence of the widespread differences in sex role definitions and expectations of the men and women they studied. They note the need for direct research on external and internal sources of role conflict which serve as barriers to adult women's development.

Our proposal then was to explore one facet of women's lives so we stated as our major hypothesis: the accumulation of roles women take on as life alternatives increase constitute a barrier to their occupational success. We intended to test this hypothesis in the process of developing a definition of the superwoman, so the definitional objective was an important secondary aspect of the research.

The media's projection of the Superwoman myth is that a woman who attempts to reconcile career and personal life must deny herself happiness since there is a dichotomy between so-called womanly

success and professional success. The media say that a choice must be made, and happiness will follow if women make a clear choice, preferably the traditional one.

Therefore we set out to discover if professional women were suffering or if the myth served the function of inhibiting them so that they were discouraged from attempting to progress up the ladder of success. We wondered if the myth might be perpetuated so that women were given a message which counters their efforts to achieve economic and career parity. We wanted to explore the nagging question of multiple roles at the same time that we asked the women participants to define Superwoman in their own terms, and examine the meanings within the perspectives of their own experiences, personal and professional.

II. METHODOLOGY

Our original proposal was to focus our research on a particular subset of women, administrators in higher education. We chose that population because we were active in groups of women in higher education, and we had what we felt was easy access to that group. We also felt that they constituted a pivital group because they work with, teach and counsel younger women, undergraduates and graduates who will join the work force of professional women. Professional women in the collegiate or university setting are those women who provide role models, socialize the young into the world of the intellect or the professions, and who interpret women in a world of men. Their numbers are few, particularly in comparison to undergraduates, men faculty and administrators. However, their influence is out of proportion to their numbers.

We wanted to test our hypothesis and have superwoman constructs defined by women who are on the cutting edge of our society. The women who are the leaders, the opinion makers, mentors, the setters of standards. Some of them are well known and highly respected in their fields. Some are better known outside their offices while others are more typical than famous.

At the urging of our NIE Program Officer, Dr. Susan Klein, and combined with our own increased interest in expanding the project, we included women professionals outside higher education. They were managers in large corporations, foundations, public agencies and business. They too were in contact with younger women so that they also might be said to be involved in the socialization of younger professional women.

The group interviews were conducted with those women who attended a regular or more appropriately, occasional meeting of one of the groups for women administrators in higher education: The New England Concerns, New England Minority Women Administrators, The New York Alliance of Black Women Administrators, and Radcliffe College professional staff.

Our individual respondents ranged from the chief executive officer of a campus, senior manager of a world wide corporation, to beginning admissions officer. Their professional positions reflected the range which may be found in large and small organizations. Our respondents were volunteers, were interested in the project, were involved in one of the higher education group interviews, or responded to an invitation to participate.

The individual respondents had participated in a group inter-

view or were drawn from a list of women administrators whom we felt would typify women with multiple roles. The list was drawn up by the co-principal investigators and interviews were determined by the availability of the women. There were many more women who would have been included if time, energy, or money had permitted. The original proposal called for the inclusion of 100 individual interviews, but the funding did not permit such an extensive level; however, we did interview 18 more women than our revised schedule of 50.

Prior to the group or individual interviews, respondents were asked to fill out the forms which are included as exhibits 1, 2, and 3. The group interview was conducted in the form of a discussion and usually took about 90 minutes; the questions asked were: How would you define Superwoman; How would you differentiate between Superwoman and the non-Superwoman; Is there stress associated with carrying multiple roles and responsibilities; Is it possible or desirable to integrate personal and professional life; Who were the people who were influential in your development; How did the pattern develop; What are some of the rewards and satisfactions associated with carrying multiple roles; What are the sources of support in juggling multiple roles; How do other woman and men view a woman who carries multiple roles; How do you think you influence younger women; Is it desirable to either drop or to retire from all the multiple roles.

The individual interviews took place in the homes or offices of the respondents or co-principal investigators. They too were conducted as a discussion and the following questions were asked: How would you define superwoman; How do you see yourself in relation to that definition; How do you cope with carrying multiple roles; What are some of the strategies that you use; When was this pattern established, high school, college; Who was infulential in your development; What do you think are the stresses and strains associated with carrying multiple roles; What do you think are the rewards and satisfactions associated with carrying multiple roles; How do other women, men, and younger women respond to your multiple roles and responsibilities.

Following the conclusion of the interviews, we divided the transcriptions of the interviews by age cohorts (Group I aged 20-35, Group II aged 35-50, and Group III aged 50 and over) and analyzed characteristics listed on the cover form and the contents of the discussion looking for similarity of response to the questions according to age and race.

The material and analysis which follows then is the result of

painstaking combing through the transcribed thoughts of 268 diverse women about the ways in which they live.

EXHIBIT 1 Bean and Wolfman

SUPERWOMAN: A STUDY OF ROLE OVERLOAD 1978-79
Group Interview - A

1. Date of Birth: _____

2. Education: B.A. Major_____ Degree Year_____ Institution_____
M.A. Major_____ Degree Year_____ Institution_____
Ph.D. or Professional Doctorate in_____Institution_____
Other_____

3. Employment:
Current Job Title_____ Institution_____
Full-time_____ Part-time_____ Title of Supervisor_____
Number of years in this position_____ Number of years at institution_____
Prior Employment: Job Title_____Institution_____Yrs._____
Job Title_____Institution_____Yrs._____
Job Title_____Institution_____Yrs._____
Area:
Academic Affairs_____ Administration/Business_____
Admissions_____ Career Planning/Placement_____
Continuing Education_____ Faculty_____
Financial Aid_____ Library_____
Registrar_____ Student Affairs_____
Other_____

4. Salary Range:
Under $10,000_____ $20-25,000_____ $35-40,000_____
$10-15,000_____ $25-30,000_____ Over $40,000_____
$15-20,000_____ $30-35,000_____

5. Institution:
Private_____ Public_____ 2-Year_____
4-Year_____ 4-Year + M.A._____ Ph.D. granting_____
Co-ed_____ Single Sex: Male_____
Female_____

6. Please check the roles which apply to you:

__Administrator	__Advisor	__Advocate	__Analyst
__Arbitrator	__Athlete	__Breadwinner	__Colleague
__Committee Member	__Community Activist	__Coordinator	__Counselor
__Curr. Developer	__Daughter	__Divorced Woman	__Faculty Member
__Faculty Wife	__Fighter	__Friend	__Graduate Student
__Grad. Student Wife	__Housekeeper	__Idealist	__Implementer
__Job Developer	__Learner	__Lone Woman in Office	__Manager
__Mediator	__Mentor	__Mother	__Older Woman
__Organizer	__Planner	__Policy Implementer	__Policy Planner
__Politician	__Recruiter	__Researcher	__Risk Taker
__Second Wife	__Single Parent	__Single Woman	__Supervisor
__Talent Groomer	__Trainer	__Wife	__Young Woman
__Other: Please List			
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Would you be interested in further participation in this study, if time permits?_____

Name_____Business Address_____ Bus. Phone_____

Thank you for your cooperation.

EXHIBIT 2

Bean and Wolfman

SUPERWOMAN: A STUDY OF ROLE OVERLOAD 1978-79

Individual Interview - A

1. Date of Birth: _____

2. Education: B.A. Major_____Degree Yr._____Institution_____
   M.A. Major_____Degree Yr._____Institution_____
   Ph.D. or Professional Doctorate in_____Institution_____
   Other_____

3. Employment:
   Current Job Title_____Company_____
   Full-time____Part-time____Title of Supervisor_____
   Number of years in this position_____Number of years at institution_____
   Prior Employment: Job Title_____Company_____Yrs.____
   Job Title_____Company_____Yrs.____
   Job Title_____Company_____Yrs.____

4. Occupation (if different from job title)_____
   Professional Affiliations_____
   _____

5. Salary Range:

Under $10,000___	$20-25,000___	$35-50,000___
$10-15,000___	$25-30,000___	$50-75,000___
$15-20,000___	$30-35,000___	over $75,000___

6. Company:
   Approx. number of employees_____ Assets_____
   Type of product or service_____Annual Operating budget_____

7. Please check the roles which apply to you:

__Administrator	__Advisor	__Advocate	__Analyst
__Arbitrator	__Athlete	__Breadwinner	__Colleague
__Committee Member	__Community Activist	__Coordinator	__Counselor
__Daughter	__Divorced Woman	__Faculty Member	__Fighter
__Friend	__Graduate Student	__Grad. Student Wife	__Housekeeper
__Idealist	__Implementer	__Job Developer	__Learner
__Lone Woman in Office	__Manager	__Mediator	__Mentor
__Mother	__Older Woman	__Organizer	__Planner
__Policy Implementer	__Policy Planner	__Politician	__Recruiter
__Researcher	__Risk Taker	__Second Wife	__Single Parent
__Single Woman	__Supervisor	__Talent Groomer	__Trainer
__Wife	__Young Woman	Other:	
_____	_____	_____	_____

Thank you for your cooperation.

EXHIBIT 3

Bean and Wolfman

SUPERWOMAN: A STUDY OF ROLE OVERLOAD 1978-79

Individual Interview - B

1. Date of Birth: _____

2. Education: B.A. Major_____ Degree Year_____ Institution_____

M.A. Major_____ Degree Year_____ Institution_____

Ph.D. or Professional Doctorate in_____ Institution_____

Other_____

3. Employment:

Current Job Title_____ Institution_____

Full-time_____ Part-time_____ Title of Supervisor_____

Number of years in this position_____ Number of years at institution_____

Prior Employment: Job Title_____ Institution_____ Yrs._____

Job Title_____ Institution_____ Yrs._____

Job Title_____ Institution_____ Yrs._____

Area:

Academic Affairs_____
Admissions_____
Continuing Education_____
Financial Aid_____
Registrar_____
Other_____

Administration/Business_____
Career Planning/Placement_____
Faculty_____
Library_____
Student Affairs_____

4. Salary Range:

Under $10,000_____
$10-15,000_____
$15-20,000_____
$20-25,000_____
$25-30,000_____
$30-35,000_____
$35-40,000_____
Over $40,000_____

5. Institution:

Private_____
4-Year_____
Co-ed_____

Public_____
4-Year + M.A._____
Single Sex: Male_____
Female_____

2-Year_____
Ph.D. granting_____

6. Please check the roles which apply to you:

__Administrator
__Arbitrator
__Committee Member
__Curr. Developer
__Faculty Wife
__Grad. Student Wife
__Job Developer
__Mediator
__Organizer
__Politician
__Second Wife
__Talent Groomer
__Other: Please List

__Advisor
__Athlete
__Community Activist
__Daughter
__Fighter
__Housekeeper
__Learner
__Mentor
__Planner
__Recruiter
__Single Parent
__Trainer

__Advocate
__Breadwinner
__Coordinator
__Divorced Woman
__Friend
__Idealist
__Lone Woman in Office
__Mother
__Policy Implementer
__Researcher
__Single Woman
__Wife

__Analyst
__Colleague
__Counselor
__Faculty Member
__Graduate Student
__Implementer
__Manager
__Older Woman
__Policy Planner
__Risk Taker
__Supervisor
__Young Woman

III. GROUP INTERVIEWS

The group interview is a method which is useful because it provides an opportunity to explore focused research questions with more than one respondent. It can provide valuable insights which might not be elicited in an individual interview. We chose the method because we wanted to interview administrative women in the context of their organizational lives. We wanted the sessions to be as natural as possible and conducting the interviews in the context of the group's regular activity seemed to be a way to contact a large number of women administrators. We wanted to talk with women who constituted natural groupings, who were not strangers to one another so that we would obtain straightforward responses based on shared work experiences, interests, job experiences and concerns. We felt that the group interviews should be woven in the organizational fabric, providing program content for the organization and a basis for future programming while giving us insights into the thoughts and lives of the women.

We also chose the shared group experience because it is a familiar part of the lives of women professionals. They have found this a way of providing support as they moved into new roles in higher education because it offered them opportunities to meet with other women across campus lines and on a regional basis. They needed this avenue since they were often the first or only women administrator in male dominated offices. The meetings helped them search for common meanings, explore problems, devise strategies and develop new insights about their situations. Their confidence, individual understanding and perceptions were strengthened by the contact with other women colleagues.

We speculated that the group and individual interviews would provide us with contrasting and similar responses so that we could examine differences in tone, definitions and evaluations. We found that the extent of the differences was greater than we had anticipated, and we will discuss those differences in the conclusion of this section.

The group interviews were all conducted with higher education administrators in collegiate settings because we had access to those groups. We had been more or less active and knew many of the women who carried leading program planning roles. Two types of groups provided group interview sessions, the loosely affiliated administrative groups and interested women professions affiliated with the same college or university. Concerns-New England, New England Minority Woman Administrators, and The New York Alliance of Black Women were the regionally based organizations which we used

and other sessions were held at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Radcliffe College and Rutgers University. The participants all chose to do so voluntarily because they were interested in the discussion and the topic. They filled out information sheets giving personal data, selecting their various roles (See Exhibit 1, page 10) and indicated if they were interested in additional involvement with the project if time permitted. They then gave us their name, work address and phone number. Not every woman filled in the bottom, and at one interview session over one hundred women appeared but many did not turn in the information sheet.

The groups ranged in size from four to over one hundred women with an average of 31 participants. The interview session constituted the entire program or was sandwiched in between business items on the agenda. The Concerns group is not structured and usually consists of participants sharing problems or triumphs while the NEMWA has evolved into an organization with officers and geographical divisions. The New York Alliance represents the diverse segment of public and private higher education and caps its year of activity with an annual statewide conference.

The participants were a diverse group coming from a variety of campus settings, small single sex colleges to large research universities. They held positions from the chief campus executive to a staff assistant on her first job with a range in salaries from under $10,000 to over $40,000. The majority of those completing the information sheet were in the salary range between $10,000 and $25,000 and had held the position for fewer than five years.

Thirty-six per cent of the respondents were between 20-35 years of age while 46% were between 36-50 and the remaining 18% were over 51. They were a highly educated group with approximately 32% holding doctorates; even the Black women were over educated in relation to the total Black population since two-fifths of the group either had doctorates or were in the process of acquiring them. This is atypical if one were to compare the respondents with administrators outside education but is an expected norm in the field of education; in fact, there are few opportunities for job mobility or promotion without an advanced degree. Only five of our participants had less than a baccalaureate but had been employed in college business offices for a long period of time, working their way into professional jobs. Three of the five were Black, and two of them were slowly acquiring a college education in the evenings.

The Black women who constituted 47% of the group respondents

were concentrated in beginning positions in student services; many of them were originally hired to work only with Black and Hispanic student programs, and many of these programs have been merged into the general area of student services. However, the women are still responsible for working with minority students and representing their interests within the context of their offices. They carry a very heavy service load since they often are the only links on the campus to the outside Black communities and the students rely heavily on them for emotional support, counseling and interpretations of the institutions.

The Caucasian women, on the other hand, work in a variety of areas: student services, academic administration, libraries and campus executive offices. Forty-one percent of them hold doctorates, and many have moved into administrative positions from teaching positions in the same or similar type institutions. The shrinking market for faculty and affirmative action programs provided the impetus for many of the women to become administrators.

Our respondents were asked to check a list of 48 roles and to choose those roles which they felt described them (see Exhibit 1). The listed roles had resulted from a workshop session conducted wiht NEMWA members in the spring of 1978; those women generated 82 separate roles which we classified into five categories: personal relationship roles (wife, mother, etc.); professional roles (supervisor, researcher, etc.); roles related to skills (organizer, implementer, etc.); roles associated with personal characteristics (fighter, mediator, etc.); and roles relating to community affiliations (community activist, committee member).

None of the participants checked fewer than five of the 48 items on the checklist. The average number selected was 27. In addition to the more traditional women's roles of wife, housekeeper, mother and daughter, most of the participants chose other roles of a more non-traditional nature: policy planner, risk taker, analyst, fighter, advocate, manager, breadwinner, etc. The most frequently chosen roles were;

administrator - a logical choice with this particular group;

committee member - also part of an administrator's life;

organizer - necessary role to be able to carry more than one role;

advisor - in the home and work context;

daughter - a continuing role for women;

housekeeper - an almost unaminous role for all women;

learner - consistent with other characteristics;

mentor - perhaps consistent with advisor role;

planner - also necessary to carry out multiple roles;

breadwinner - almost unanimous even for married women;

coordinator - goes with organizer, planner roles;

friend - shows a sense of being connected to others;

mother - takes precedence over being single parent, or divorced women in that those roles do not appear as often;

colleague - perhaps a similar role to that of friend or mentor;

counselor - perhaps akin to the above categories;

implementer - similar to coordinator, organizer, etc.;

manager - same as above;

risk taker - could be considered to be important aspect of being pioneers in a field or occupational setting.

The groups were asked to discuss the following questions:

GROUP INTERVIEW - B

1. How would you define "Superwoman?" What comes to mind when you hear the word "Superwoman?"

2. How would you differentiate between Superwoman and non-Superwoman?

3. What are the conditions which create a Superwoman?

4. Is there (any) stress associated with being a Superwoman?

5. How does she handle stress?
   A. How does she integrate personal and professional life?
   B. What strategies does she use?

6. What are the rewards and satisfactions associated with being a Superwoman?

7. What are the sources of support for the Superwoman?

8. How do men and other women view the Superwoman?

9. How does the Superwoman influence young women of student age?

10. Is is possible or desirable to retire from or shed the Superwoman role?

When respondents were asked to define the superwoman, they responded in three ways: with hostility and negativism, amusement or with interest and concern. The first group initially maintained that they were reacting against the term as used by the media plus they were mad and annoyed at the prospect of having to do more than was expected of a man. The women in this group maintained that only a few years earlier, they had been enamoured of the designation and connotation associated with Superwoman but now wanted to be the equals of men including not having the burden by multiple roles.

The second group was amused because they thought the question silly, reminiscent of the comic strips and perhaps too trivial to be considered seriously. Some of the Black women fit in this group. Some of the latter did not like the question because they considered themselves and all Black women to be superwomen, descendents of generations of superwomen. They maintained that the social and political circumstances of the United States are such that sheer survival and any achievements required great strength, perserverance and the ability to handle many roles, tasks and duties. They separated themselves from white women whom they felt do not face the same demands or pressures. Some of the Black respondents expressed their hostility to white women in a variety of ways and recounted stories of their experiences. They indicated that the fact that white women were beginning to work outside the home and adding roles was "nothing new" since it had long been a necessity and fact of life within the Black community.

The third group was intrigued with the question and exploration of the concept of the Superwoman. They wanted an opportunity to discuss some of their problems, questions and nagging doubts with other women but had seldom found an opportunity to discuss multiple roles. Many of them found comfort in the discussion, and there were often comments made to the effect that they had never expressed some of their ideas on the topic before to anyone.

however, once the discussion began and the initial reactions had been expressed, the discussions assumed a similar character, and the only major differences were associated with racial perceptions.

When the women were asked to describe the Superwoman, the negative descriptions were fewer in number than the positive, even in those groups which resented the term and felt that multiple roles prevented women from achieving success and career mobility. The negative descriptors were:

"depression" - a logical result of attempting to be perfect and carry multiple roles, meeting many demands;

"sense of stress" - a result of the demands and pressures; a negative term because "that's what a woman has to be to be powerful";

"neurotic over-achiever" - though over-achievement was never defined or placed in a context;

"she is terribly abused and misunderstood because no one tries to understand her";

"means an inability to say 'no'" which is seen as a weakness, not a strength;

"no sense of who you are" another indication of weakness;

"takes on more and more roles" in constast to men who limit their roles;

"unreal quality because it makes you like you aren't," contrasted with the real woman and authenticity;

"doesn't get treated like a real person" - goes with the statement above;

"perjorative term";

"commercial conception of the successful women".

"Running" and "juggling" were used both as negative and positive so they will be used as transitional descriptions in this context. To some of the women who would like to live calm, serene lives with few demands on their time or selves, the images associated with running and juggling were not compatible with their concepts of success in male terms. However, for those women who heard

the phrases as positive, it was consistent with some of the other positive descriptors and implied movement and prevention of stagnation or boredom. Some of the positive statements conjured up other images than those evoked by the negative descriptor:

"juggling roles successfully", "balancing";

"juggling more than one role successfully";

"energetic" a necessary attribute for the above activities;

"woman in the limelight";

"powerful" - perhaps a natural concomitant of the above;

"can rise above an irritating and frustrating situation gracefully";

"finds a solution to a frustrating situation";

"takes risks";

"does everything asked of her";

"does everything asked of her efficiently";

"is in charge of her career";

"has strength", "has ego strength";

"takes on more responsibilities";

"gives 150% effort and does it well";

"is invulnerable";

"does more than 24 hours of work in less than a 24 hour period";

"is other oriented";

"goes charging in, in spite of what is happening around her";

"is well organized";

"self-disciplined";

"not performing women's traditional role in society";

"a sort of adventurer";

"seeks to do things for the first time".

Thus a picture emerges of an interesting, capable, strong woman who perhaps represents the idealized conception of those women questioned as to "What is the Superwoman?"

When they were asked to differentiate between the Superwoman and an ordinary woman, there was more unanimity and less equivocating. At this point, much of the reluctance to identify with the concept began to be dissipated. It became more apparent that the women did identify with the non-traditional woman whom they described in some of the above terms.

Some of the Black women tended toward ethno-centrism and described all Black women as being super and non-Black women in opposite terms:

> "You are asked to do so many things in your role as an employee and then so many roles at home that this is what makes you the super person. I think that trying to perform all these roles and how well you integrate all of these things. And then whether or not you feel you have to be the best in what you do, I think that probably comes from our own background and upbringing. That in order to get into the positions that we have, oftentimes, you have to be better prepared for that job than maybe some other woman who is not a minority. You come to the position probably at a different level. You have had a lot of your background to bring you to this point, I think. We've been superwomen from the time we started out in America, it's just that other people didn't know that."

A more traditional image was evoked by women who said the following: "She (the non-Superwoman) is a conventional woman who exists in a society where women get married, have children and stay home." "She is a woman who can afford to stay home, has the luxury of taking it easy, has income." This last definition was given by a Black woman, again reflecting a shared view of societal realities and the lower status of the Black woman.

This conventional woman was described as a woman who would say: "I can't, I can't do that, I don't have time, I don't know how." She was also described as a woman without an accumulation of roles, who "was not visible or a high achiever." It was also said that she "does not have career goals and extend themselves

(sic).

However, one woman took the long view of the question and answered from an historic perspective when she said: "It is a matter of myth and reality, and the distinction is a false one because women have always had lots of roles."

The response to the question of what conditions create the Superwoman could be divided into three categories: societal, family and individual. As might have been expected, the Black women again stressed societal conditions such as the economy, hardship and oppression providing the necessary conditions. They shared the conviction that there were particularistic reasons which supported their contention that only Black women were worthy of being considered super. On the other hand, some of the women felt that economic necessity was not limited to any one group but touched all races. The societal conditions which affected a number of the respondents began with the growth of the women's movement allowing them the freedom to go to work or the encouragement and the opportunity.

Many of the women discussed the influence and assistance given them by their families. Mothers were often cited as major influences because they provided examples as they either worked and managed families or were active in their communities as well as being wife/mother. Many of our respondents were socialized in families where the established expectation was to be busy and involved; this was especially the case of the Black women growing up in close knit families and communities. Their mothers were supportive of their interests as has become the case with the families which they have created. Many of the respondents are married to men who have encouraged them to continue their careers, and their children have grown up respecting the integrity of a woman who is involved in a career and/or other activities. Many of the women talked about the importance of having role models whom they could admire or emulate, mother, other female relatives so that combining career and home responsibilities seemed a very normal thing to do.

Many of the Black women talked of the inner drive and necessity "to go to school and learn how to achieve." As Epstein (1973) found they had been raised with obligations to succeed and were encouraged to do better than their parents, to work harder since it was necessary to be twice as good as whites to achieve the same level. So, they received the initial impetus within the context of their families and absorbed the lessons well. However, the white women were also being instilled with lessons which they too learned well. They were helped to develop a sense of self-esteem

and self-respect leading to a sense of independence so that a career, for many of them, was a natural extension and means of actualizing that self-esteem. Even though the childhood circumstances differed for the two racial groups, they shared this early socialization and inculcation more than either realizes or recognized.

When the women were asked if there were stresses associated with the Superwoman, there was unanimous agreement that this was a condition of life associated with carrying multiple roles. In fact, some women confessed that they found relief only when they recognized stress as a normal part of life and omnipresent.

Stress is manifested in different ways, for some its symptoms are physical: migrane headaches; physical fatigue; exhaustion. However, most of the respondents discussed stress in terms of their inner feelings. They talked of "feeling pressure from the emotional demands being made on them." A Black woman said that she had "feelings of guilt when I do anything less than 100%" while a white woman expressed the same spirit in different words when she said, "I have the feeling that the job has to be done, and I can do it better than someone else would." The women talked of the necessity to constantly prove their self-worth and meet the perceived expectation that they had to perform all the time. Some of the respondents resented the fact that they were being judged on "everything" while men are judged on only one factor.

Some of the mothers expressed concern about their children and their anxieties about raising children to be able to perform in a competitive society. Perhaps they reflect the classic concern of American intellectuals who decry competition, idealize a more cooperative society but try to prepare children for both types of societies. These anxieties are also an expression of the competing aspects of educated women's lives, the conflicts between the traditional and non-traditional which have contributed to their own success.

Black women talked about their particularly unique source of stress, again derived from external and societal forces. They pointed to the expectations and behaviors of white women and white superiors, partially a result of their being ghettoized in low status, low salaried student service positions. They were squeezed between the white institutional power structure and Black students who placed heavy emotional and often unrealistic job demands on them. In addition, by virtue of their education and employment, many of the women were isolated from the Black community and a full social life because of a shortage of men of comparable status. It

is in this context that their families take on such great importance.

All the groups defined some of the stresses on their lives and the source as internal, self-induced pressure and expectations. They discussed how they demanded so much of themselves, more than others did or than they expected of others. They said that they felt that important aspects of their lives was "doing everything well according to your own standards." There was concern that they often felt that they were not fulfilling their potential. One woman said that "we demand so much of ourselves." Perhaps a necessary component of those self imposed pressures is the feeling as expressed by one respondent that she felt that "others are jealous or envious" of her accomplishments.

Some of the women talked about the stress and fatigue caused by switching from one role to another, work to home. They found ways to cope with this problem but it was ever present. Many of the women summed up this problem by focusing on a very tangible fact of their lives, the lack of time. They bemoaned the small number of hours in a day as if having more time would alleviate this pressure and allow them to make transitions smoothly and without stress.

If stress is a constant factor in their lives, what is done to relieve the relentless pressure? They must have means of finding relief or risk collapse or professional destruction. Our respondents have found a variety of strategies which they use to keep their sanity and equilibrium.

Many of the women have devised techniques which center on physical activity:

1. "I feel attitude makes all the difference in the world. I can tackle something here or at home. I did disco Saturday night and hopefully it can hold me over until next Saturday. I love to dance and I do swim. It clears my head so that I can get back into it and do the very best that I can."

2. "One of the things I used to do when I first came to work at Yale, one of the things that fascinated me was how I used to come home at the end of my day and go into my apartment, close the door, put the O'Jays on my stereo and dance and giggle. I was all by myself. Nobody was watching me, but it just became fun. I loved it in the sense that I was me, and I was suddenly the other person

I had suppressed all day long."

In addition to dancing, they play tennis because they can "whack the heck out of a tennis ball," throw darts, swim, listen to music, participate in organized programs of exercise and physical fitness or even catch up on sleep. Some of their solutions center around recreational activities:

"baking bread . . . allows a chance to really pummel the dough";

"sewing";

"go to a movie";

"do housework", "get children to help with the housework and take them to the office";

"go home, put my feet up and smoke a joint";

"socialize with people other than those I work with";

"socialize with work colleagues";

Then there are more personal solutions which have been devised:

"spending time with my children";

a single woman said that she found solace "finding a substitute family for comfort";

"I cut my hair, do my nails, put on fresh make-up and cook dinner";

"started taking music lessons";

"I may day dream a lot";

"What I do is take two candles, go into the bathroom, fill the tub up with bubbles of every possible scent I can find. I turn all the lights out, light the candles, and I have a glass of sherry. I get into the tub and close the door. I don't think about anything else but me. I sit there until the bubbles dissolve, then my sherry is all gone, and I get out and I feel good.";

"have a few minutes alone";

"have a lot of energy and good health";

"write letters and don't send them";

"talk about a situation or problem with children, or husband or friend";

"women's groups and the chance to be with women";

"being a hypochondriac";

One woman found that a solution was "to divorce my husband";

"get angry at meetings";

"using community activities as an outlet".

Some of the women had found methods in which they managed to integrate professional and personal lives in ways which minimized stress. Some of these methods described were:

"consider that the roles at home provide enough distance from work so that it is possible to get the proper perspective";

"make choices and eliminate some things, develop priorities";

"say no to many requests";

"write letters of recommendation in the tub";

"don't deny stress but accept its existence";

"take a nap when I get home and eat at 10:00 instead of 7:30";

"use a taxi service for the kids";

"use the delivery services for supermarket, and laundry";

"use a cleaning lady".

The strategies and styles which the women used had evolved over time and were particularistic. The groups found that it was an enjoyable experience to share some of their methods with other women. In fact, few had ever talked about the glue which held their days and schedules together.

Then the women were asked if there were any rewards or satisfactions associated with carrying multiple roles. This was an important question since the preceding questions were designed to explore the negative aspects of combining professional and personal lives. This question gave them an opportunity to really explain and explore the reasons why they bothered to put up with the problems discussed earlier. They told us that among the rewards were:

"taking control of my personal life, having a sense of control";

"feeling alive, like a full human being";

"money, having money to do things";

"a little power and prestige";

"I feel that I have alternatives";

"I feel that I help students and make someone happy, it gives me a sense of fulfillment";

"I have satisfaction in being able to do a number of things";

"I feel that I have control over the transitions in my life";

"never being bored";

"I receive rewards from different sectors of one's life";

"there's a feeling of participating in the world's work";

"there is internal self fulfillment";

"there is control of one's environment";

"utilizing one's talent";

"being envied, admired, getting special recognition";

"moving up, getting a better position";

"always learning something, gaining new experiences";

"feeling confidence";

"growing and changing".

All of the above phrases are dynamic statements and bring to mind a modern woman who creatively enjoys the myriad of activities in which she is involved. Though those activities may cause tensions and stress, the satisfactions would appear to provide enough of a challenge and joys to provide justification for any problems. These are women who thrive on overcoming hurdles because they have faith in their own abilities. They also have confidence that they will be moving ahead, learning new things, growing and developing.

Our respondents recognized that they were not isolated and though they might be superwomen, they did not exist in a vacuum and could not accomplish as much as they would like without the support of others. We asked them to tell us the sources of support and got the following responses:

"close friends, other women and women's groups";

"children, home, family, husband';

"men, in a professional way" "colleagues at work";

"secretaries";

"having someone who cares and that you can share with";

"satisfaction with yourself, doing the job well";

"having inner resources" "having support from within";

"learn to pull in on yourself";

"occasional compliments";

"challenges from other people on the job, having to show them";

"thinking you can do anything";

"seek professional help at times";

"day care center" "fast food" "family day care";

"cleaning lady";

"neighbors and a neighborhood structure";

"schools when they support working mothers with compatible scheduling".

Even though the respondents express a dependence on some old fashioned values such as self-reliance, they mention very mundane modern services, like day care centers and fast foods. They also recognize the support which they get from husbands, colleagues, secretaries, cleaning women, neighbors and family. The Black women consistently and to a great extent talked about the value and necessity of having family involvement because the family provided them with comfort, nurturance, a protection, the historic role of the Black family.

The women who were heads of households talked a great deal about their children, about the way in which they had to overcompensate in the neighbors' eyes. But they too use their family as a place for recouping strength and finding shelter from external pressures.

We asked the participants to discuss the ways in which they thought they and the Superwoman was viewed by other women and men. Their responses centered on the way in which they were viewed by women:

"some women are resentful";

"some women put obstacles in the way of other women";

"some Black women are ambivalent";

"women are feeling pressure to do something non-traditional";

"women are becoming more androgynous and men are not".

Their ideas abour men's views:

"some men don't understand women wanting careers and why women can't be happy at home";

"single men are intolerant";

"some of the pressure has been taken off men";

"men feel that some of the pressure is off, there is a more common exchange of roles";

"men are accepting and supportive";

"older men, in their 40's and 50's, have difficulty accepting and younger men are better";

"divorced men with children understand and do similar things".

There are some conflicting ideas stated above, but this probably is a realistic indicator of the ways in which women think men are assessing women's new roles and styles. Pines (1979) found that even pro-feminist men express contradictory statements about "women's place" exposing gaps between intellectual and emotional understanding. There is no universal male view of the changes which have taken place just as there is no common line for women.

Since many of the women worked directly with students and younger women, we were particularly interested in their perceptions of the ways in which younger women were thinking of multiple roles and integrating professional and personal lives. Some of their comments were:

"students don't want marriage and kids or they don't want to work";

"some want to have a career launched and then have children";

"some say they will put off decisions until later, they think that they have to plan for one or the other, that there are no options";

"others see the Superwoman as a positive force with high energy and a role model";

"some young women expressed concern that the 'quality' of men is not there, not what they want and they will not choose less";

"some students are admiring and respectful of women carrying multiple roles";

"some women students admit that they are scared and feel guilty because they do not think that they can combine work and home responsibilities";

"some say that they don't understand why some of these women allow themselves to be put in the Superwoman role, men should do more and share equal footing";

"many realize that they will be doing it (juggling roles)".

Granted there is considerable ambivalence expressed in the statements above, however, there is an alarming note which runs through the comments. Younger women do not think that they can combine the roles and if they do, the career must be started first. They do not think that there are available options to explore or choose. Perhaps we need to examine the messages being communicated to young women and sources of those messages. Are they being influenced by the media, women who are regretful for their choices, women who appear to be too successful to emulate or are their own educational settings stressing professional careers above all else?

We asked group participants to explore the question of retirement or shedding the Superwoman role, and we had some interesting responses, based on realistic appraisal and fantasy.

In one session, one woman jokingly said that she "would like to find a rich man who'll keep me." This provoked a variety of comments and a group sharing of a fantasy which had been unspoken until that time. One woman said that during the past year, a number of her feminist friends had all expressed the wish to find a rich man, stop working and have a good time, without obligations or pressures. Slowly and hesitantly, several of the women admitted that they had thought the same thing but had not been able to express the fantasy to anyone before this discussion. They jokingly shrugged off the idea saying that they knew that it was totally unrealistic and certainly not consistent with their ideology. The fantasy never appeared again in either group or individual interviews, so it might have surfaced because the group was being playful, tired, or both. There were other expressions which were rooted in reality.

Some women were concerned about aging, retirement and the hardship of being an administrator who would lose her office and duties, unlike an academic who could continue to teach and do research extending an active professional life.

Some of the Black women said that minority women were socialized to the work ethic and it was not possible to retire. However, Black women said that they had created a mode so that they knew what it was to be more human and did not feel the pressures of retirement in the same way.

One woman said that retirement would come only when "you can't validate it (work) with your life" and that she would work as long as her health held and she had strength. Another woman said that there was no necessity to retire if one were pursuing personal goals and that was what made one happy. Another said

that her parents had emphasized achievement and that was consistent with working as long as she could. Another said, "You can't stop, it's the tumbleweed effect."

In general, the discussants were not in favor of retirement, and this was consistent with their discussion of the reasons for their assuming multiple roles. They love work and activity because it is a way of maintaining their sanity, avoiding boredom and finding outlets for their enormous energy and vitality.

Well, what did we learn in the process of conducting the group interviews: The Superwoman syndrome is one which is familiar to many women assuming multiple roles. There are more positive aspects to the characterization than negative, and the women who fit the descriptions are proud, happy, creative, energetic, capable of accomplishing tremendous goals. They are happy, but the context of group discussion provides them with an opportunity to review the more negative aspects of their lives than in an individual interview. Within the group setting, there are sharp differences between Black and white women in that the former stress the injustices, their low status, poor treatment by whites, separate themselves from whites in every instance and express ideas they could not express in an interracial setting.

Women's groups provide support and a chance for the participants to discuss their situations in an atmosphere which will give increased understanding and strength to cope with the problems of their work lives. However, the group setting tends to reinforce the negative views of the women's work lives. Though they are allowed to vent their feelings and experience consciousness raising, the net effect is a negative one. They cannot function in the same way in the context of their offices so that the venting is unrealistic in one sense. Perhaps both Black and white women ought to be moved more quickly into the mainstream, function in groups with men so that they could be helped in a more supportive and constructive manner to cope with the people causing them problems.

IV. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Sixty-eight women were interviewed individually, of those 27 were non-white, two Asian-American and 25 Black. They were a very diverse group ranging in age from 26 years of age to 63 and employed in positions from beginning semi-professional to chief executive officer. All except two had college degrees and 46 held advanced degrees, two in law, 21 Master's degrees and 24 Ph.D's. Forty-five of the group were mothers, 32 were wives though 11 were second wives.

Forty-four of the 68 were employed in institutions of higher education, eight in corporate businesses, six in governmental agencies, three in foundations, three were unemployed but two of those women were corporate and institutional directors with independent incomes. The women had salaries ranging from under $10,000 to over $75,000, and their employment tenure ranged from under one year to over 25 years with the same company.

The 25 Black women, with the exception of one, were clustered at the lower end of the professional ladder. They were involved in direct services to students or in equal opportunity programs, not in the more prestigious faculty or administrative level positions, though one can make a direct correlation between their position and the position of Black women in American society, their lower level of educational attainment also explains their occupational positions. In institutions which exist to credential people, the staff and supervisors reflect that function since many promotional opportunities have strict requirements for advanced degrees. Though there was one chief campus officer in the group of Black women, on the whole this segment of the respondents does not hold comparable positions even though they are employed on the same campuses and in many cases are the highest ranking Black women at the institution. However, in comparison to 1975 U.S. census data, they are far better educated than their Black sisters of whom only 10.1% have completed four years or more of college, and in 1974, only 13.9% held professional or administrative positions.

The majority of the respondents were employed in the Northeast, but almost half (30) grew up and attended college in other regions of the country. Eighteen are middle western in origin and eight from the Southeastern United States, most of whom are Black. Perhaps this is another verification of the mobility of educated professionals and their willingness to relocate to follow opportunities. This characteristic is probably not limited to men since those women who are originally from the Northeast have also

moved away from their family of origin and work in areas other than their hometown.

In response to the question of roles, the most frequently chosen by half the group were: administrator, 54; committee member, 50; mediator, 37; organizer, 49; advisor, 56; housekeeper, 41; learner, 52; mentor, 40; planner, 48; advocate, 40; bread-winner, 37; coordinator, 43; friend, 57; idealist, 33; mother, 45; policy implementer, 44; wife, 32; risk taker, 48; supervisor, 46; daughter, 46. Since these roles cover a spectrum of styles, perceptions and duties, we may assume that they reflect the variety of talents and interests of this group of professional women.

When the individuals were asked to define the Superwoman, there was less equivocating than had been the case with the group respondents. This may have resulted from the one-to-one nature of the interview and a different type of interplay between women; many women in the groups were reluctant to take a position early in a discussion without knowing more about the ideological stances of the other participants. The range of the individual responses covered the following areas:

> "I would say superwoman is the type of person that has several roles. She is a friend, mother. She has a job, family, different roles. She's the type of person that's really involved in the community, involved in her job. . . . You always think of superwoman as a person who is really involved in lots of activities, home, community, family, school, wants to be with the children at work." (a young Black woman);
>
> "Probably in the traditional sense women have been perceived as basically being confined to the home in the traditional roles, and now that women are out working, doing some very non-traditional kinds of things and managing their lives, they are perceived as superwomen." (a young Black program director);
>
> "As a figment of some sociologist's imagination . . . I think that in general sociologists and psychologists are fond of making generic titles and applying them to a whole range of people who display some or not all of the same characteristics, and therefore, to me, labels tend to be not meaningful, damn near meaningless." (older woman executive);

"Superwoman is a person who takes on multiple roles and achieves in all or most of them as contrasted to a one-track person who has a career or personal life." (older woman);

"Superwoman is probably someone who doesn't crumble, either at 5:00 or 10:00 at night." (middle age woman executive);

"I think a basic expectation is that the arms are open and the head is screwed on right.";

"It's a state of mind more than number of roles, activities and so forth. It's a sense of feeling capable, of accomplishing tasks and taking on tasks which are extraordinary in the eyes of one's peers. It sets some people apart." (a Group II Black administrator);

"I guess my definition of superwoman would be someone who functions in a variety of roles and ends up feeling responsible for areas which, responsible both in a personal and an on the job sense, for areas which go beyond her individual responsibility. I think of terms as applied to Black women in professional settings, seeing things and feeling the need to get involved and so something about them." (Black).

The positive descriptions of superwoman tended to be more prevalent than the negative definitions, but there were some distinctively negative discussions.

". . . brings a negative thought to mind, and they are based on the perceptions of what other people perceive as strong, domineering, dominant, unyielding, foreceful kinds of individual. I don't think women or men necessarily fall in that category . . . It's a negative description that categorizes people or stereotypes them, that's what it is.";

"I would define superwoman as being the product of everybody else's imagination and actually achieving other people's fantasies.";

"I don't feel that I come from a culture that stresses that, (multiple roles) and so I never really quite understood it. I never understand why certain people felt that they had to be the best.";

"I guess it's a term that may have a little derogatory connotation, especially as defined by men. I think it was, in fact, invented by men." (business woman);

"Someone who is very, very, very, very tired but who tries to look really up on it. Someone who is managing to other people's satisfaction a great number of roles."

In the greatest number of instances, hesitance quickly gave way to a discussion which tends to place the Superwoman in a positive light, a woman who is real and admirable but has some unreal qualities because of her capabilities. The negative descriptions are minor because they tended to be qualified by more positive statements. The consensus was that the term could be defined to mean a woman who successfully maintains many roles, achieves balance in her life, is poised, confident, is socially responsible, can do anything which is necessary. In sum, she is someone whose positive characteristics outweigh the negative ones.

There were few distinguishing differences in the ways in which Black and white women offered a definition though two Black women did qualify their answer to our next question in racial terms. One said when asked "How would you view yourself in relation to the definition given?":

"I would probably be considered as being a Superwoman by people who have those kind of goals, and myself as a very ordinary Black woman."

An older woman administrator said:

"I think I'm all of those things . . . the fact that as a Black woman I have earned a Ph.D. some umpteen years ago, specifically 1950, in a science which is for women an under represented field and for Blacks also an under represented field. I have also moved along in academic activities, from a researcher to a professor to an administrator and have in each instance been first in a particular category where I served. I have provided within that concept leadership of a very positive nature or constructive changes in productive activities . . . been seen as a person who has been seen as a person who has strong administrative, managerial abilities."

As a group, the younger women, between the ages of 20 to 35 deny that they are superwomen and stress their primary obligation as one to work for family rather than attempting to integrate and

meld multiple responsibilities. One young Asian-American woman said:

> "I am not super. I experience conflict, I experience guilt a lot of times. I don't feel guilty about the conflict. I feel guilty about not doing all these thing perfectly."

A woman in a powerful position in an important national organization who is the mother of two pre-school children expressed her concern:

> "I'm not a Superwoman, but I recognize, I would be a traitor if I didn't recognize the Superwoman problem. It is a societal problem for all of us . . . I think if I were denying that there was a Superwoman problem, I would be a traitor to all the other women who are trying to go through the same thing, often without the same resources. . . . There's a lot of conflict . . . as an administrator. I feel very strongly we cannot change our standards of work for women, and this is the conflict I feel all the time. I don't want to change the standard of expectation, but sometimes you have to change the manner to which you reach those standards. I think it's been very constructive for me as an administrator to be going through this and as others go through it to realize there are different ways to go through it and to have to deal with it on an administrative level."

Perhaps one young woman lawyer expressed their feelings when she said: "I don't think that I could handle that many responsibilities at one time well." These nine young women express doubts about attempting to do more than one thing, work or family though one young fiscal manager admitted to feeling like a Superwoman on some days of the week. This may be a natural response and their energies may be concentrated primarily on one area of their lives. Two of the women said that the choice of not marrying or not having children had simplified their lives to some extent since it cut the potential for dissonance.

Perhaps assuming multiple roles comfortably is a function of age and experience and should be viewed on a continuum: it is something which women learn as the necessity requires it. This observation is based on the responses of the respondents from 36-50 years of age. They tended to give definitions of the Superwoman with which they could identify.

One of the two non-college graduate women said when asked how she viewed herself in relationship to her definition of the

Superwoman, "as a woman who is able to combine all the things that matter to her most into one and balance them with maturity, career, motherhood, marriage or at least a relationship." Her answer was:

> "As super, I think the reason, with all the modesty I can muster, I feel that way is because at 43 years of age, there weren't an awful lot, in fact, there were almost no women who, as I was giving birth to and raising my children and at the same time developing a career, were also doing that. Almost all the women in my set of friends were simply raising children. I just feel that at this stage to find myself at 43 earning about $34,000 with absolutely no college education and three healthy well-adjusted sons and a man that I love very much, is super. I paid my price, but there's not a lot of other women that I know who have developed all those things."

Another accomplished woman said:

> "I'd never call myself a Superwoman, but I've always viewed myself as someone who has been involved in too many things. Maybe I was defining it in terms of myself, because I used accomplishments in my own field, as a scientist, as a take-off into other kinds of things. Also, I tend to be activist oriented, though I enjoy research, it always has to have a function or purpose. I have always kind of been involved in several different areas, had a variety of interests, social goals. In terms of writing, that kind of influence . . . along broader lines, then going into administration and thinking, 'Well, it's one thing to try to influence things generally, but if you get a hold of a single institution to see if you can zero in. What kind of impact can you have on that institution?' feeling that you can make a fundamental change in an institution. I've learned that that's not true or at least the change that you make does not stand up after you leave, like you are holding up a building, and it falls apart after you get out. . . the idealism is fundamental for me anyway."

An academic administrator explained how she fit the description:

> "Frequently stretching too far, too great an extent to meet it, feeling somehow that it's an appropriate definition and that I ought to be able. There's no reason why with the brains that I have, the body that I have that I could not extend myself to handle all these issues. So,

if at times, there is a problem, I think it is an extension of trying to do what I really don't expect any woman's going to be able to do."

Part of a very long and complex answer was given by a New York administrator:

"Do I see myself or think of myself to be a Superwoman? I guess there I'd split the answer and say yes and no. On the yes side, there's just no question that I was brought up in a Protestant work ethic at home. I saw my father work 12 hours a day, and I was told that was good, work hard, like your work. I think that I picked that up and modified it for me in the sense of saying, 'I'm going to go out and find some work that I like. I'm not just going to do the work that I happen to end up with and force myself to like it.' . . . that little guideline . . . becomes a little difficult to abide by . . . the higher you go in the bureaucracy."

A Black woman with six children explained how she related to the definition:

"I feel good about myself. I feel that I'm super in the sense that I'm in touch with myself. I know what I want. I don't always know how to go about getting what I want. I know how to help others to be comfortable with what I want and to help them relate to my needs as I'm able to relate to theirs."

An executive in the communications field stated the similarities to the definition by stating:

"I wouldn't say that that's what I've been because for one thing I've had only one child which I think makes life simpler. I also have had a participating husband who has been very much there, and I also had very good household help. I regard myself as well organized and not particularly flappable, so that there has never been a frantic atmosphere or sense of 'I can't cope with all of this.'"

A Black woman who equated ordinary Black women with the Superwoman said:

"An ordinary Black woman is a very complicated conglomerate of many roles, probably first a daughter. I think that most Black women have been shaped by their mothers.

> She is a sister, both as an actual sibling and also part of the Black sisterhood. Then you add all the other sorts of external roles that we normally achieve in society. I think there is a bond even in Black women you don't know, because you know that if they have made any kind of achievement externally, you know the price that has been paid, and you know all the other roles that most of us by and large are doing, as opposed to people with housekeepers and all of that."

An older woman (Group III) defined the concept as "a person who manages to do all things that are necessary to do in that person's life." She is a senior corporate executive and said:

> "Yes, I've coped with all the things I've had to do, and I've always felt adequate in being able to cope with whatever I had to do. I'm blessed in that I've never been asked to do anything that I couldn't pull off one way or another."

This answer tended to be characteristic of this age group and perhaps is best summed up by a college president who quoted a family saying which had governed her life and which she felt applied to people with inherited energy, motivations and the right conditions, "To whom much is given, of whom much will be expected." One Asian-American administrator glibly stated that she translated the definition "Dying while trying" to do all the things she mentioned, "first-rate administrator, a mother, a hostess, a consultant . . . with a great deal of polish and competency." The sixteen women in this older cohort tended to give off-handed definitions of the Superwoman, because they had not cast themselves in heroic terms. In a sense, they did what they felt that they had to do and did it in a way which made sense to them; they fulfilled their sense of destiny, obligation and duty, working, balancing career and family with community obligations. They did not take their condition as a plight to be contended with, they did not define themselves as suffering. Perhaps the hard parts had been blunted by time, but they were comfortable with their self-defined status and collection of roles.

Where does it begin? Where did these women learn to manipulate time, tasks, relationships, roles so that they have become so accomplished? What started them on the road to being presidents of successful businesses, chief executive officers of campuses, senior corporate officers, academic and student personnel administrators? Who provided the motivation, the impetus, the example, the encouragement and at what point in their lives? We felt that the answers to those questions would give us some

important understanding of the development of professional women and perhaps some assessment of the important persons in their lives. We hoped to determine the relationship of the school and school personnel to the development of these women, because we thought that the school must play a significant role in socializing and preparing women for future roles and responsibilities in our society.

The assumption of multiple roles and activities was not something which began late in the lives of our respondents. They always remembered doing things and being busy, as children, as teenagers, and as women. Some of the descriptions of the beginnings of their lives are:

> " . . .elementary school. As a little girl I had an animal collection, and I numbered. Children who collect, you know, they classify, they categorize, and I had this huge area in my room which was a very large room which I shared always with somebody. There was always somebody there. . . one year it was my cousin with TB, and I had no thought that this was a problem. There were five of us, and the total count was nine children because of the cousins we had coming. The very pressure of an exciting family made it necessary if I was going to survive at all to start this kind of a protection in the family. I had music lessons with piano and violin. I had special art lessons. . . There were so many people in our house at all times. . . it was a very interesting setting, but it made it extremely hard to get the work from Winsor School done. I was a terrible student which was very sad, but it was not considered important that I learn. My father still says, 'You should have been a boy.' . . . I paid for my own college . . .He said that it was not important for me to go to college. So organizing was an early need for me though I was happily enormously energetic." (a woman in her sixties)

An Asian-American woman (Group III) commented:

> " . . . the biggest change occured when I was in college, and my friends (at home) all told me that when I came back that I was just a changed person. Going to Bennington had a tremendous impact on me. For one thing, I found out how bright I was, and secondly, I found out that I had some specific talents. Third, the whole system of Bennington education is based on criticism and learning from criticism, and this I find very interesting. Ninety-nine percent of the world doesn't function that way and

doesn't like to, and I thank two people I studied with, one was Eric Fromm, and my tutor was Peter Drucker . . . when you consider the amount of psychological counseling that I do and referrals that I do is based 99% on that particular course . . . and a basic philosophy that Eric Fromm had which has to do with perceiving people in terms of their potentials, what they can be and having utter faith that those things were possible to accomplish, maybe not to accomplish but to set out in that direction. Peter Drucker probably had the bigger impact on me, in the sense that there was a huge fight, the kind of fight that only Bennington could have. That was the question of what I would major in, and I wanted to study with Peter Drucker because he was one of the most outstanding people there. Peter Drucker would not take me as a tutee if I was going to concentrate on Asian economics and persuaded me, actually it was a knock-down-drag-out fight at a faculty meeting, that I was not Asian. I was very clearly American and that I had to make a choice then, and it was a lot of nonsense . . . Half of it was Greek to me, because I was too young to have ever thought in those terms . . . it's only in later years that I realized what the decision cost me."

An accomplished scholar and administrator (Group II) said:

" . . . particularly in high school when I think I did nothing but extracurricular activities. I don't remember studying until I got to college, that's something I learned in college. In school I was able to be on all the athletic teams and sing in the chorus, and so on, and to do everything I wanted to do without a problem . . . I went to a school where there was a great deal of emphasis on being well organized. I think just in terms of what was expected . . . People were expected to do a considerable amount of work, and they were expected to do this and that. I think it was the orientation of the school." (a girls' prep school)

A Black woman (Group II) described her early activities:

"In high school, I was a Girl Scout for 12 years, up until I was a senior in high school. I was a Y-Teen for about the same length of time. I was doing all those things, and I took voice lessons and dance lessons and was part of the school choir and worked on the student government. So I guess, yes, the pattern started, and I guess I've always done things in college. Being a part of the choir all over

again and getting involved in social clubs. We didn't have sororities at Prairie View, so I joined social clubs . . . I guess I always got myself involved and every now and then I think to myself, 'You asked for all of this.' So, I guess I have always done a lot of things."

A competent scientist and administrator (Group II) described different circumstances:

". . . when people ask how I got where I am, I say, 'I grew like Topsy.' I think if you'll look in terms of psychological effect, I have been doing this for a long time, and that it was a very sad and unfortunate experience. My mother died when I was 13, I was the oldest of four, and we were determined to keep our family together. So that I guess I was always managing and always directing, and I think you might say it goes back to an earlier time because my parents were immigrants who had a deep sense and appreciation for education and learning and were both schooled in their native languages but not formally educated. Both were skilled workers; my mother was in the fur business and I guess she designed garments. My father was a baker who had his own business before he came to this country . . . so that I was always encouraged to do things on my own, and anything that I did, I had to do by myself."

A Black woman (Group II) described her youthful activities:

"In high school, I just remember working hard. I went to Dunbar (in Washington, D.C.), and it was a very competitive place where I wasn't involved in a lot of extra curricular activities as I recall. I did the things that paid off, got into the Honor Society, worked on the newspaper. There was some pay-off there that was tied to other things. I tried out for the drill team, but felt silly in the little uniform and decided it was much more fun to study Latin, so I gave that up after the first week. I worked hard at being a student."

The recurring pattern of athletics and music appear in the comments of another Group II woman, a manager in a public agency:

"I think as a child I was very active and although I certainly wasn't great at everything, I did pursue a number of interests. Certainly in high school which continued from junior high school actually. I got involved in a number of activities that were quite diverse. In those days I was an athlete. I'm not now active in

sports. I've always been very active in music, and at one point thought of becoming a musician so that has always been a very important part of my life and has always, until recent years, taken a great deal of time. I used to practice three or four hours a day in those days, which my husband to this day cannot understnad. I did that well but also maintained my academic life very well. In high school, also I was able to continue this pattern. I gave up athletics to a certain extent and concentrated more on academics and music but became more ecletic in my musical interest. In college, I did very little studying and a lot of activity, was very active in virtually every musical organization there was on campus, in student government. It was the first time I became very much involved in government issues and became active in house politics. I think a little bit to my regret, I did not take as much opportunity to delve into academics."

A Black woman (Group II) who is Director of Personnel for a large medical institution said:

"I really feel as though I've been very active all my life. I've been involved in something whether I belonged in it or not, for as far back as I can remember. But the first time came when I was in high school, of course, and worked for a hospital as a diet aide and was preparing to become president of the hospital. A few years down the pike, I discovered that this wasn't going to happen and went on, started working in a department store as a clerk-typist even though I couldn't type and tried to plot how I would become president of the department store until I realized that wasn't going to work. I really feel that I've always had a driving force to do something very special and significant. I'm still probably trying to do that."

A young Black woman (Group I) who directs a project in a public agency said:

"I've always been what some people would call an overachiever. I've always wanted to make something out of my life. I've never thought that I would not work, probably I may have succumbed to the traditional role of wanting to be a teacher and having free time to raise a family and do this and that, but I got caught up probably, by accident, although they say nothing is by accident."

Another Group I Black woman answered:

"I've never known any other way to do anything. I've never known what it's like to be just inactive because ever since I can remember from a little girl up, I was just involved in doing things and part of it was because I wanted to. The other part was because my parents encouraged me to. And then it got to a point in high school which I was involved in everything. There was nothing that I wasn't involved in and that's the way my life functions. I find I'm least happy when I'm not doing something. It bores me to sit and do nothing."

Our participants then are continuing a long established pattern of busyness and involvement. If they were not encouraged, then they were not discouraged. Who were the significant people in their lives and who provided the encouragement and support to let them develop and maintain their levels of activity? The early influences can be separated into three categories in order of importance; close relatives, school or school personnel, colleagues or employer. The family is the most usual influence, by indirection and example, by direct influence and encouragement or by not discouraging the young woman. This support tends to have no generation differences so the responses which follow are cross-generational.

A program administrator (Group I) in an Ivy League institution discussed her family influence and growing up Black in a Texas town:

"My parents . . . because they were the role models and the first people I knew when I was growing up. My father, I remember coming home one day when I was in the fourth grade, and there was a boy in my class that really boasted about how he could spell this word and all those big words. So, I went home and told my father that he made me feel like I didn't know anything. My father said, 'Well, we'll sit down tonight after dinner and we'll deal with that.' Right after dinner we sat down, and he taught me how to spell personality and ability, and he said, 'You have both, and in order to be successful in life, you've got to have that and maintain it.' I went to school the next day and told him that he couldn't spell personality and ability, that I had both, and he didn't have either. From that I guess things just developed . . . my father always believed that I could do anything that I wanted to.

In growing up, even though my parents encouraged me to be successful and to be ambitious, to want the best things in life, at the same time, being an only child I think they didn't want me to think too much of myself . . . I think

maybe they were trying to protect me from being so big headed so that I would become snobbish or whatever, but I think as I got older, it developed maybe a little bit of self doubt in me about myself . . . But at the same time that made me want to be more competitive and to prove to them that I could do it. It also developed a lot of determination in me . . . I tried to excel in everything and do well and be in this and that contest and win."

A foundation executive (Group I) noted:

"I've never had any strong female role models. I suppose my father was a public service, public servant kind of person, and he instilled in me a real responsibility to society, to extend myself to others. He died when I was 15, so I never knew him as an adult, of course. He was a very cold man, but I think that I got a sense of responsibility to society as a whole, and that I must continue to develop my social function. As far as a social person, thinking on my feet and making other people feel at home, that comes from my mother the hostess."

A Black woman (Group II) told of the struggle against odds and her family's role:

"When I was very little, I was extremely ill. I stayed in bed for almost two years, and I had an extraordinary family in which it didn't really matter that you were sick. I was raised that everybody had to carry either a physical, mental or emotional amount of what have you, so when you have setbacks, you will use those to develop something else. So that I've always been extremely organized and extremely determined. I was raised at a time when Black was not beautiful. I had short, kinky hair. I had excema, I was Black. I was not gorgeous, so then my parents set out to instill in me a sense of my own personal worth. You know if you are raised in a Black family and know that at that particular point in time, straightened hair is a value of womanhood, then you have to find other role models and other things for yourself to get a positive image about yourself."

Another common experience was voiced by a Cambridge administrator (Group II):

". . . Everyone in my family has simply had an expectation that people would do things, a variety of them.

There was no demand for particular things but just sort of an unspoken understanding that everybody was involved with something.

When I was growing up, my mother did not work. She was involved in various kinds of voluntary peer activities. She went back to work about the time my father retired. My mother got bored with my father being retired. My father got bored with being retired, so he went back to work and is still teaching. He went back to school and got another degree. In fact, we only just persuaded him from going back for a Ph.D. at age 62. Only because Columbia had this law degree, if you paid them $25.00 you could turn your LLB into a J.D., and that made a difference. He felt for his faculty status he needed a doctorate. It's a hard thing for him to stop."

An older chief campus officer summed up her family's influence by saying:

"I think I'm no more or less busy than any of the men or women in my family whom I have had the privilege of knowing. I come from a family in which people live fully. We know how to laugh, and we know how to play, and we know how to work. I think that the problem that I have had in being terribly lost in the Judeo-Christian Puritan ethic, 'First you work, then you play when work is done', is the same problem that both my mother and father had or all of my grandparents or the two great-grandmothers."

Some of the women were influenced by immigrant parents:

"My mother was unique in that she was a college educated person, and she's done graduate work in Japan. There was something about her coming from Asia in 1919 as an educated woman, it was a rarity. She comes over to the Island, marries and settles there, and is extremely active while carrying on the household chores. She really does it without setting herself up as a career woman so that meals were always there on the table on time. There were rather elaborate dinners, and at the same time when you think back, she's running a language school, a radio broadcast. She's editor of the newspaper on Korean affairs and has a lot of pressure from Korea to wipe out the radio program, because they find out that she's critical of the Korean government. People that she talks to are threatened, and their families are threatened. She's doing real estate on the side, and she's doing all this without seeming to be a

liberated woman and doing it while paying tremendous homage to my father as being the head of the house and running the family.

On the other side of the coin, of the children in the family, I was probably the only one who had any kind of real relationship with my father who was very old fashioned. He didn't believe that a woman should be educated, except that he married an educated woman so that was a great source of hostility there. I'm the only one that he supports in higher education, and all the girls are college graduates. My sister went to the University of California, but there was something then to send four daughters away to the mainland to study. This is all done with my mother's real estate dealings, and it was never brought up. It's done very quietly. One assumes that if you really want something, you are going to get it. There's money for it, but money is never discussed."

A daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants remembers:

". . . I was the last of six children with a large span because my oldest sister is 13 1/2 years older than I am. In a way, she belongs to another generation, had very different parents than I did. When I was growing up, my parents were very wealthy and very generous and very liberal and lived in a big house that was always open for fund raising kinds of things. But that was not what my sister had, my father was a relatively new immigrant and worked all the time to make it. I have a brother 17 months older than I am, and we were brought up as a pair of siblings with different parents than the other four kids. Yet we were all very close but lived much more with our parents than the other kids because by then, they were off to schools and colleges. My whole recollection of growing up is that everything I did, my father and mother thought was wonderful, minimal criticism. I wrote a poem one night, one that I still remember, it was one night when they went out and left me alone for the first time. I was literally alone. I don't know how old I was, pretty young, maybe seven. I wrote a poem and had it on the kitchen table, and when they came home, my father had it printed, gave it to friends. I didn't think it was a great poem, but I still remember it because my father made such a fuss about it. That's rather symbolic. I think he honored my mediocrity, I really do. Anything that I ever wrote, he thought was the most smashing thing he ever saw, that's my memory of always having that kind of support. I think that's enormously motivating."

We found, surprisingly, that grandparents were significant influences on our respondents:

> "My grandmother had been widowed when she was about 30 years old, had three small daughters that she raised. She never remarried, trained her daughters to enter early marriages for security but believed in education and always told me even when I was a small girl that I should some day get married, that was sure, and have children. But I should expect to work, because it's a man's world, she said and it's better when you're out there, not just at home.
>
> It was remarkable and that first came to my attention in the day care center days when other mothers were horribly guilty about leaving their children. I didn't feel half bad at all. I tried to trace those feelings back, and they had already been sanctioned by Ma, my grandmother."

Another said about her family:

> ". . . I think it was because there were people who cared by caring through what others did. Neither one of them are super energetic or super achieving people, but I think it did matter very much to me. The most intellectual person in my life was my grandfather, a very, very brilliant professor. He gave us a lot of time and gave all his books to the kids, so he was the most intellectual person. My mother really set the pace of never ever get a B, be at the top of all of the activities."

Many of the women discussed the roles of their husbands in influencing and sustaining them in their activities and efforts to find outlets for their energies:

> "Since I've married and was out for a while (job market) and am now back at work, I would say that my husband was the most influential and supportive person throughout all of this, and I think that for several reasons. First, it's the type of person he is. Before we were married, we discussed my working, we didn't expect to have children so soon, as I remember it. We had discussed it as to whether, what his thoughts were on my continuing to work, and so we reached an agreement. If I wanted to work after we were married, that was fine. So ten years later, we had that agreement, so it was easy to go back into it. He has been most supportive and most helpful in my returning to work as well as after returning to work, finding the games and

pressures. He was very helpful in explaining to me and sort of helping me to sort out what was really games and what was really for real and just provided a good sounding board also in trying to help me get my bearings in work. So, I would say without a doubt that he has been most supportive, he's been the biggest influence. And my daughter had helped also. I think her absence of tantrums and absence of a lot of things that I hear that other children go through, I think that has been a big help too, because she has assumed more responsibilities though she didn't want to and expressed this to me, but she has really rolled with the punches. I think that's been a lot of support."

School and people connected with schools played a lesser role in influencing the women in the study. A couple of Black women remembered the support of their public school teachers who had faith in them and their peers who did well in school, and one described the early encouragement given her in the following terms:

". . . because I showed intellectual ability at that age. They pushed me to do even more things, to go beyond just the academics and do other things. I was shown off as the little girl from Kimberly Avenue School who did all these things. At that age, I was the smartest kid in the class. I grew up in a bad neighborhood. I was the one who stayed out of trouble. But to that, I was sort of singled out, and the authority figures were pushing me."

There were Black respondents who remembered being influenced or given encouragement by parochial school, Catholic and non-Catholic, teachers who perhaps because of the small size of the schools could take more directed interest in the children. Some of the memories were stated:

". . . the principal at the high school. I was the first Black girl who had ever gone to the high school. It was an all girl, Catholic academy in St. Louis, and the Sister was very good. She understood that there were things that because of my beliefs and my race that I had to get very much involved in. She was very good about saying, 'Okay, you can leave at 12:00 to go to McBride High School to give a speech at Assembly.'"

Another described this influence:

"There was in high school a nun who was an English teacher who was the first person that ever recognized in a way that I could see, who communicated that recognition to me that

> I had accomplished something, that I had achieved something, that was different from what the other girls in my class had achieved or accomplished. Who, because of that, treated me differently, encouraged me to do more challenging kinds of things. That was really very important, very important. In college from my sophomore year on, the head of my major department (another nun) was very supportive and again encouraged me to do things, for example, when I was a junior, she let me teach part of her course as an undergraduate assistant, things that I never would have gone out after. She simply said, 'You can do this,' and I did it. So those two women provided opportunities for me to discover the kinds of things I could do, but again, they were the active ones."

A Black woman who had gone to a New York City parochial school recounted:

> ". . . in high school . . . the principal and history teacher, both male, encouraged me. It was a Seventh Day Adventist School, both males who kind of took me under their wing in a fine way and let me feel that I could do a lot of things. They kind of labeled me 'smart', but that wasn't it. It was that 'you can do it'."

One administrator attended a small prep school which encouraged her:

> "I went to a school where there was a great deal of emphasis on being well organized. I think just in terms of what was expected, people were expected to do a considerable amount of work. They were expected to do this and that. I think it was the orientation of the school . . . also being a very small school. At the time when I was there, I loved it, but when I had been out a year or two, I was appalled to realize how homogeneous it was in everything, maybe that helped inculcate the same set of values."

None of the Black women cited influences or support from colleagues, mentors or advisors, and only a minority of the Caucasian women were moved to discuss this source of encouragement. Two Caucasian women mentioned their psychoanalysts as being very important in their development, and no woman mentioned any religious support outside the teachers cited above. Two examples of colleague support are given below:

> "One is that probably my greatest role model has been the person I work for. He has a very balanced attitude and has never expected me to put work above all else nor is

it an expectation he has for himself. There are a great many shared values between the two of us which has made it easy to work for him, but has also allowed me to develop my own value structure, so it hasn't been encroaching."

Another major executive noted:

". . . the woman I succeeded was my mentor from the time I started to work here when I was in college by happenstance. I happened to work for her and she brought me along. She was the one who brought me back when it was clear that she was going to retire, and her successor was not on board here. She wanted me to do it. So that she's my mother here. There have been other people who have given me help and advice along the way but not to the same extent that she has.

She was a single woman whose whole life has been work, and she loves it and instilled in me some of the same love of the work she did. She hasn't been disappointed in me so much as shocked that I would do to myself what I've done. First of all, she was very doubtful that I should get married. When I told her, she wished me the best but said, 'I hope you're not making a mistake.' When I had children, her reaction was that of a lot of people, 'I thought you weren't going to have children.' It did take me a long time to decide that I wanted to do both, and she just shakes her head in disbelief. I'm really doing it and she always says, 'I hope you are happy. I hope you're doing what you want to do.' But she cearly thinks I'm a bit deranged and is probably right.

I clearly had a woman mentor at work and I don't know. I'm not convinced that it has to be a woman. In my case, it was, however."

The topic of stress and strain was one which evoked considerable interest, introspection and discussion. Each of the respondents could tell her own story of pressures which she felt in her life or the ways in which they had lessened, for stresses seemed to be related to the stages of women's lives. We found that the older the women were, the fewer pressures they defined as impinging on them. The younger women, particularly those unmarried and just establishing careers had the most seemingly tranquil descriptions of their lives:

1. "Well, I would think doing a good job and being respected

at work is special. It's always difficult to establish respect from others, particularly as a woman in the legal profession. In the non-work environment, wanting to please friends, and family sometimes is also stress. I guess that's all I could point to is wanting to please others and establishing respect for one's work."

2. "Probably for women in general being perceived as less feminine, being perceived as aggressive, and there is nothing wrong with that. Having males feel threatened by that, that can also work against one in personal relationships because I think that as women, particularly single women move into top management or whatever, they do put their careers first. They don't take a lot of nonsense that they might if they were dependent human beings and not independent women."

An older single woman, already established in her career, had different concerns:

"Of course, in emergencies you really get torn apart, with time commitments and even the ability to organize your thoughts, to play those roles. Even maintaining a household can be stressful, getting the service people there is a really big problem sometimes. Sometimes, it looks insurmountable, so the maintenance of a household without somebody there is difficult at times. I think being in higher education gives us some flexibility, being able to move from personal life and get things done and not have it all in on us, because that's the pattern of higher education. It makes it easier than in the business world. I don't know because I've never been in the business world. It's not a particularly stressful experience."

Another single woman (Group II) echoed some of the concern in our first quotation, that of establishing relationships, but this woman has had time to deal with the stressful aspects of that part of her life:

"Well I think a number of friendships have gone by the board. I learned that somewhere in the late sixties, that I couldn't be all things to all people. That's something for someone who is pretty insecure back in those days to learn. If you're an insecure person, you try to please other folks, and one of the days I woke up. I stopped trying to do that and started to try to be myself. It doesn't just happen over one day. It happens over a long period of

time. It turned that the emphasis came on growing as a person. As a personality and I recognized with that growth, that some friends were going to be left along the way. I think some of that is a conscious choice on my part, given my own maturation and some of it is, it's just too bad, but that's the way it is, I simply don't have time to make the kinds of commitments or investments of time in those relationships. I think one of the stresses and strains is that there is a constant turnover of friendships.

I think with some regret that one of the ways I've dealt with this is that I bought the 'either/or' message. I just could not figure out in my head, in my 20's how to handle marriage and a career, couldn't figure it out. Part of the reason is that I'd seen no female role models. In the late sixties, and early seventies as I began to see role models of people who had done it, I was angry. I mean I was really angry, because I knew that I could have done but I had never seen any woman that had done it. I guess I'm sort of at peace with it now, but I do feel it is something that passed me by. So that I would place that as one of the major stresses that I dealt with by buying the 'either/or' message, and thoroughly realize now that I didn't have to buy that."

Most of the women in the study were either married, had once been married and had families. The concerns of the majority of the participants are unlike those quoted above. The stresses in their lives as they relate to multiple roles and we heard them voiced over and over: lack of time, lack of support, lack of energy, lack of personal time and space, self-doubt, lack of satisfaction in own performance, and not progressing fast enough on the job. The women in Group III could view their efforts with the wisdom of their age, so their discussion tended to be retrospective. A senior executive of a major corporation cautioned:

"Probably allowing yourself to think that half the world is depending on you. False responsibilities are probably the greatest strain, and the ability to separate false from true, that's very important. . . . We assume false expectation and we take a certain amount of pleasure in that assumption.

There's always strain in any new movement. I think when you see a large class or group of people break out of a mold, that always creates a certain amount of chaos, simply because the break with tradition is extremely difficult, or the

break with what we had learned before. I think one of the things that helped me was I was never forcibly taught that there was only one role for me."

A chief campus officer mused:

"Now that my children are grown, I think the conflict I feel in what I do is that as a society we haven't really worked it out well. People who are in service professions, like education or medicine or psychiatry or certain other professions, is to be one in which one is motivated in large part by the needs of others and by helping other people bring things about. . . . As a result of that, we all have un-doable jobs, unlike less varied and for many people, less interesting work, there is no beginning and no end. If one only did an eight or ten hour day on a five day week and took vacations, it would truly not be possible to function at all. I think that's a great waste, because those of us in higher education are supposed to teach by being, not only by doing. We don't look as though we've learned anything about the art of living as a liberally educated citizen and human being. So my stress is that I'm a person who cares a great deal about friends and relatives and younger people, maybe on my staff, or maybe friends who need assistance.

I love to walk in the woods. Love to hike. I love the theater, chamber music. I even like to practice again sometimes. I'm very interested in art, and yet weeks can go by at which I'm getting up at 5:00, at my desk by 7:00 . . . and I'm at work until midnight . . . When I was younger, I found the tug mutually exclusive, sometimes demeaningly agonizing primarily in the range of children. When I was in love with my husband or the man I care for, in that you can't be in two places at the same time.

I don't believe it's because I'm a woman. I don't think it's because I'm a mother . . . we probably would find that many so-called successful men also struggle with this, as Yeats called it, 'whether to choose perfection of a life or of a work'. So it seems to me then that the particular struggle I've had was because as a person devoted to life through love and work, I enjoy both tremendously and would by inclination put love ahead were there no economic component that entered in. It was never possible for me to do what some of the people we know who are successful scholar-writers have done. When I think of someone like Barbara Tuchman or Lady Ward who had the means to live gracefully, who could

choose a working day of six or eight hours when they wished to be with their loved ones or to exercise their curiosity about other parts of the world and yet who could still maintain a steady rhythm of work in which results accrued. There hasn't been a choice available to me, and it's not a choice available to many professional men and women. But, I don't think it's necessarily different in intensity though; perhaps somewhat different in cast in men and women."

Two Group III participants voiced their problems with lack of support:

1. "I think there are stresses and strains in my relationship with M. (husband). Some of it is multiple roles, but I think some of it is the time that it takes away from the relationship. But on a rational basis, it doesn't take away that much time, because he has never been available full time. But it's in the mind and in the perception, it doesn't have to stand up to scientific proof. So that if M. thinks the times I'm not available, I'm not saying this critically because I understand where he is coming from, to make it more general, the way some of us do, children especially who say, 'You're never home, you're always away'. When if you looked at the calendar, it was four times in four months. I think he's had a lot of that feeling.

   I also think there's stress about, he has a high achieving woman who gets a lot of overt praise, because well, I got a letter yesterday from someone who was in my workshop this summer. I was a trainer but also an instant mentor, and I gave her a lot of advising time informally because she was thinking about changing careers. I encouraged her to do it, and she now is a big success out in Minneapolis. She's changed her life, all this in four months, and she wrote this four or five or six page letter, half of which is in praise of me. It took me a long time to realize that this is difficult for M. to take, so I don't show that kind of letter anymore. But part of him likes it, of course, and yet, he's never been able to talk about it. Then that's in the mail, so I sort of avoid it, but what I can't avoid is when we run into people socially who have been my students or consultee or from a company where I have been an organizational development consultant and will start this rave trip. I shrink inside because I have a feeling M. doesn't want to hear it. I don't want to sound disparaging about M., I think it's hard for a man to take this though it has to have

high ambivalence for him because he is also proud; he likes it.

2. "First of all, I'm a single woman, and I'm divorced. I have been living alone now for about 13 years, and I've had the full care of three children since they were, well the youngest one was four at the time of the split, and the eldest was 16. That's the age difference. It's a tremendous responsibility, and when you're working, I think probably the biggest strain is the constant demand of giving and giving and not anyone to give you in return or to be supported by and living in a completely new community.

   It was rather gutsy to just pick up my whole family and move to a completely strange community to live with no real friends and no resources to fall on, in the supportive sense of the family setting. I hadn't even thought about that. I thought that it was time for me to have a career, and I just took the best job offer at the time.

   It's been very complicated for each one of the kids. I moved into a job, and I didn't have time to get acquainted with their school or the parents of their friends or to nurture relationships which would have made it easier for my daughter to facilitate or work into the community as a whole. Well you know, my kids have had to grow up very quickly. There's a whole gap in their childhood that you feel very guilty about that somehow or other they've missed. There wasn't much you could do about it."

The problem of physical energy was discussed by an academic administrator:

   "You're physically exhausted, number one. I find that I am perpetually pooped, but I've been living with that now and know that I will continue to feel it. There are a lot of stresses and strains on the family, certainly when my children were growing up even though I tried to pay as much attention to them as I could. There were certain things that had to go.

   The house was a disaster, from time to time, and still is. My husband, just recently after 20 years of marriage is beginning to appreciate the fact that he has a working wife, so the stresses and strains caused by that relationship because I traveled a great deal have lessened. Because I was working late in the evening and so forth, was very

difficult at times. I think that after 20 years, we have finally come together, and we are now working in a supportive role with each other. It wasn't easy.

Then my parents who were supportive in the early years, and when in fact, I started working in my later years and were not supportive, feeling that perhaps I should be home with the children and so forth.

Those stresses and strains come when you get involved and trying to do everything perfectly or just everything, for yourself, your own, personal being. It can become overwhelming and you wonder what it's all for. Should you be doing it or retreat somewhere and retire?"

One respondent said:

"If there's one thing that I think, the only problem that I've never been able to circumvent, in any way, is needing eight hours of sleep a night. As a young mother, it drove me nuts . . . I got up with them (the kids) and then stumbled for years and years, like everyone does. But in retrospect, I think that was the single worst source of strain, substantive source of strain in juggling roles."

An eloquent description of the problem of lack of time for one's self was given:

"I think of it more as areas of neglect. Certainly, there's some stress around deadlines, setting all the deadlines that I put myself to. I just let one pass; there's some stress in taking on more than one can do within a time period and for me very often that's writing. Because I don't have uninterrupted stretches of time for writing that I did when I was teaching. I remember long holidays that I used to have. I find it hard to finish a chapter for a book or something that I have committed myself to.

I feel some areas of my life are neglected right now, some personal things that I would like to have time for which may seem frivolous. I desperately need to take my skin down to Newbury Street and have the second facial of the year. I don't know why it's hard to find time for that. Vacations by myself have an element of luxury, and it's hard for a variety of reasons to make that kind of time."

The spectre of self-doubt is explained by a young mother of two pre-school children:

"The major one is time. There just aren't enough hours in the day, certainly there's some guilt. Are you doing the right thing? Is your baby's development going to be warped in some way by what you are doing? Even not the time away from them, but the way you are with them when you are there. I think those two, certainly are the big ones.

Certainly, there's a stress on the marriage, but again I think it's a factor at home. It's an emotional drain too. Maybe, if my job were different. Maybe if I weren't dealing with people, adult babies an awful lot at work, I would go home and think that it was fun to deal with these kids and husband. But often by the time I get home I've put out so much.

If I were doing, say strictly research, without a lot of people, then I'd go home and think it was great to be in a family, and we can talk and even fight a little and have a good time. So, that may be part of the stress, the emotional demands of both jobs are too similar. I would plan it differently, this is the job I've got. I don't think I would want another job, and I certainly would not say I would not have a family.

Other stresses? The stress of the marriage. I think my marriage is a strong one, and I think it will survive this. If my husband were more threatened by my position, if he minded that whole weeks go by when I don't do more than say hello and good-bye to him, if he wanted to be catered to, if he didn't himself get a great deal of emotional support from his children, therefore he wants to be involved. He helps with them. I think I'd resent him more than I do. If he were not as tolerant of a really grumpy wife which I often am, he less so, I could see how things could just fall apart. So that I worry about it, but I don't feel the same stress that some people must find when they are trying to keep a marriage together at the same time."

Self-doubt is very closely aligned to another area of stress discussed by our respondents, the feeling of not being satisfied by their own performance. A college president has this to say:

"The stresses in my job have to do in many instances with not enough time to do the job the way I want to do it. Knowing that I have a gem at this college, that could be polished, that you could do what most people can't do. It's got everything here. It just has to get bigger, and you

could have quality. You could really make it a gem but you don't have the resouces to do that. I'm scared I'll wear people out, that I've been able to attract very good people, but they are so good that if they get tired, they could very easily go somewhere else and work less hard with more resources and have, maybe, more job satisfaction.

The other stresses are a feeling that because of that, I really feel that if I talk about my own discouragement, my own anxiety about having set a time frame and looking down the line and knowing that if we don't make it by a certain date, I don't think we can do it. I'm scared that that will scare them, and they might bail out on me. Knowing that I'm scared, I'm sure that I need some support. That and the other stress is knowing that my life is one-dimensional. I guess the final stress is that I'm functioning at top levels all the time, and I think that I probably break down physically as a way of stopping. I can't control that, that's not a conscious defense mechanism so that when my body, if I have any physical symptoms, I compound them by getting scared. That's what I'm about and I do less."

Another chief campus executive expressed the same concerns in a more clipped fashion:

"The stresses I perceive in terms of whether I'm doing something correctly. I have apprehension of 'Did I do this correctly? Did I say this or did I not say this? Are there areas of activity that I ought to do that I'm not doing?'"

Only one of the twenty-five Black women talked specifically of the stresses related to race, she said:

"I find that being a Black woman in this environment, I would imagine in any environment, you would have stresses related to racism, but I can only speak from my particular instance there in that the situation that I walked into might have been unique in that I think they might have had one Black woman here who left in '68 or '69. So there's many years of absence that they haven't seen really a Black face around here.

I think that the people and the women that I work with have to adjust to it. It was very difficult, and their actions took on various forms. Some of them tried to ignore me completely; some of them were very subtle in their hostility and their sabotage more or less, but these were stresses

that I realized having been brought up in the South, I realized what they were. But it was frustrating to me because it got in the way of the program progressing. Rather than being able to put the racism aside in order to move forward together, it was just impossible for many of them to do it; this, of course, interfered with the planning that I was doing, and it was frustrating.

I found it on many levels, of course. I don't think that anybody would ever recognize that it was racism; everyone would say, 'Oh, no, it's impossible!' But I felt it on many levels, from the secretarial help; you would ask them to do something, and they would do it incorrectly. When you asked them to redo it, then they would have a 'lot of lip' or ask, 'What's wrong with it, it's just one mistake' which brings about stress of sorts. I don't want to send it out with one mistake, because there again, someone would look at it and say, 'Oh, yes, she's Black, she didn't even notice.' So it's that sort of thing that other people might be able to get away with, but I didn't feel that I could.

. . . in itself is not hurting I know, after a while you get beyond hurt, but it is frustrating in that it keeps your program from progressing. The games you have to play around and people that you have to work around in various methods which takes time and energy away from the goal which I feel is the goal. I realize sometimes I'm the only one who is playing the game; the rules that others have are not the same, so it's frustrating and a stress. I don't know if any other occupation would have this problem, but it is a problem that gets in the way of your goal which means it sometimes takes longer to get things accomplished."

The expectations of what would constitute enough time or how much energy is needed or what would be considered the appropriate level of performance were found to be set by the women themselves. They all expressed standards which were self-imposed or which they derived from early experiences at home. The level of stress lessened as the women's personal obligations simplified; many of the respondents talked of the easing of their responsibilities as their children grew up and as they learned to set priorities. They learned to determine what were the important tasks to accomplish and in what order they should work on those tasks. Time is a factor in the lives of all of the women, not necessarily because there is so little of it to go around but there are so many things which they want to do with their lives and have difficulty determining how they will do everything. Their accomplishments are myriad,

so the problem is not time but boundless energy and curiosity. The list of stresses and strains was unanimously outweighed by the rewards and satisfactions which they were able to define.

There were several descriptive phrases by which we can categorize the responses to the query of what rewards and satisfactions which the women derived from their multiple roles: lack of boredom, confidence in themselves, personal and professional growth, approval of others, satisfaction and pride of accomplishment and a sense of control. These women glowed and waxed eloquent as they discussed some of the real reasons for taking on many roles and responsibilities.

Let's hear about boredom:

1. "Well, first of all, I think it's a more interesting and exciting life. I have a lot of things that I'm involved in. Second, because of whatever anxieties or personal internal problems that I have, I like the sense of independence. I guess I also like to some degree the sense of power, although I'm not conscious of that, I'm sure it's there. I belive in this society one has a role of independence and power as it relates to your professional achievement. While it's nice and in a lot of speeches I made, I say that people should have options obviously if you want to work or stay home, that's as good as the option of working. In my heart of hearts, I believe that woman does not have the same recognition as a professional achiever.

2. "Well, a sense of satisfaction in what you are doing. It's a real challenge. I think that I had been home for quite a while and while I really enjoyed being home with my children, there came a point where there really was no need for me to be home. They were at school and to be able to have a challenge and go back to work, just taking my first trip, just not having my husband there telling me which way to go or turn, being able to do things for myself. To think and make decisions, that's the feeling that's rewarding. I'm a much better person from having a real focus. I had gotten a little stagnant at home, and I needed that challenge. I had begun to wonder whether I really could do something."

3. "Well, certainly the richness in life, the time. You are never bored. There are very few times when you have to think about what you are going to do next. It is an imposed structure which I think sometimes has to be dealt with the other way.

I never thought about why I was doing what I was, except to the extent that both my grandmother and mother were really upset when I decided that I had to go to work, because their idea was that they had worked because they had to and that I didn't have to. Why would I do it? It wasn't that they were not supportive but that lasted until my husband died. Then they were certainly happy that I was able to.

I just can't imagine doing things any differently, and I think that one of the things that being involved has done is that I tend to be very sympathetic to what my children are doing in many ways that women my age who aren't involved aren't able to, especially when they also manage most of the house."

Though it is difficult to clearly separate the categories, since they overlap and merge into one another, we have attempted to find quotations which fit the major themes. A sense of confidence is a very important aspect in the lives of the respondents:

1. "First of all, it's awfully important that I have something to grow up to. That may sound selfish, and I used to think it was but I don't anymore. In terms of academic credentials, when I went back to college as an older woman with three kids, everyone thought it was selfish. It was out of step before everyone else did it. In the beginning when I went to Wellesley, I did think I was mighty selfish. Then I decided it wasn't; I think for my survival, I had to do it. I have since decided that it was the smartest thing I ever did.

   It means a lot to me to have a piece of my life that absolutely belongs to me, because everyone else has a piece that belongs to them. Now they are all gone, and it is obvious. It does give me great satisfaction.

   I like what I do, and I think I do it well and that too brings a great deal of satisfaction. It's exciting. The thing about this job is that you can continue to plan and grow in the program; no one is standing over you hoping you'll fail, and that's very exciting. It's a key thing to me. I need to keep developing and growing and doing research. If I can do that, it will remain gratifying to me. The other side of it is that I need to continue to go to school, and sometimes I have a tendency to take on an overload."

2. "I really am a little bit hammy, and I love the speaking. People respond to me very positively and the more I do it,

the more I am aware that even when I think it's a lousy speech, I haven't had time to prepare, I get a super response and I love it. I love the contact that the college gives me in terms of the alumnae and the conference board. There are people that in no other life would I have the opportunity to meet. I am aware that they respond to me because of my title.

I was at a conference when I first went to the college and got introduced as the new girl in town. The people would say, 'How do you do? You're very welcome.' Then they'd turn their back on me. Then someone would tell them, 'But this is Dr. L., the new President of the College.' Boom! People would listen to me, and I like to be listened to. I'm not saying anything important, but I like it. I worry about that a little bit though I don't want to get so that they have to listen to me and to remember that I don't have much that's very worthwhile to say."

3. "I think that being involved in a lot of different roles gives you so many sources of positive feedback. I mean there's the risk also of when you feel you're flubbing, you get the same thing. But you really do feel that in a positive way and not in a chest beating way. You really feel that you can do anything that you have to do.

I have a strong sense of myself that I think I inherit from a long line of strong women in my family. Survival is just like a baseline. Then beyond that I think that my consciousness of having a lot of different roles has moved beyond the survival to the fact that it's not just survival. It's vitalizing to be able to fulfill a lot of different roles more or less successfully and pretty much, I feel successfully.

This is one of my good days, but you know, pretty much successfully. I think that someone who doesn't have that or who perceives themselves in one role or two roles or in exclusive kinds of roles doesn't have that kind of feedback from a lot of different sources. You get a three dimensional sense of yourself that you don't get, I think, in single roles."

A typical comment discussing the importance of growth as a source of satisfaction and a reward was made by the president of a consulting firm:

"Oh, I think first of all, just having a lot of new experiences, of meeting new people, of seeing new things, of getting new ideas professionally, of realizing some of the things you've thought all your life are a bunch of nonsense. You have to re-evaluate, of realizing that a lot of things are very funny.

I really think that a lot of the rewards come from all of these different parts coming together and allowing you not to be fragmented but more whole because of it. They are coming, if you can center yourself; they are all coming to the same source. You are the computer that is taking all of this in and this data is coming out.

It's also a lot of fun to have people see you in a lot of different roles, because people respond to you differently. My clients respond to me very differently from my child or my husband and friends. Of course, it works the other way around, but I try very hard to be the same person and do not want a lot of a different personnae. I think that in itself fragments you . . .

. . . you're not stuck in one place and by the nature of my work, I'm always doing a different job and meeting different people. I'm always learning new things. I'm always being reminded how responsive people are if you are honest and really enthusiastic with them. So I'd say the greatest rewards are that I'm never bored, sometimes with myself but never with what's going on. I also have really some remarkable friendships, people who are very supportive and that no matter what happens when I go home, whether it's at night or afternoon or whatever, there is at least one person who is totally and completely on my side.

I think that those are really the greatest rewards, also in terms of motherhood, I think the greatest reward, first of all, I have total recall, so it's very interesting for me to make the comparisons and see the commonality of what happens but also I really think that one of the nice things about being a mother is that you are watching something develop. That you know that you really have an influence on it. That you need to learn to live with that, but you see so many things that you like coming. Even if you don't take credit for them, you can take a certain joy in knowing that you love somebody who really has the potential for being the type of person you love."

Most of the women talked of the importance of getting approval from others, a necessary reward in addition to pleasing themselves. One senior campus officer talked of the variety and enjoyment from playing many roles and then went on to say:

> "I obviously like to be liked. That' a reward. When they don't like me, which has been happening this week, it's difficult so I have to switch and try and get myself other rewards, which I have to do anyway. If they don't like you, well then it's too bad. But those relationships are much less rewarding to me, I have some other rewards that I find more important than I will even admit.
>
> I really do like studies. I really do like statistical things and finding out what things are like. I don't care how it comes out. I think it is because so much of what I do is unresolved; it never comes to an end. There's no closure."

Two extremely successful and powerful women, one under 35 and the other over 50, talked of the satisfactions of being a woman with multiple roles:

1. There are some times when I'm just full of the rewards, and that's all I can talk about. One of them is my kids, they really are wonderful. One of my sorrows is that I don't focus as much on that as there is to be focused on. They are wonderful kids, truly exceptional; that's what everyone says, but they are. Occasionally just being their mother is a great high . . . at the moment, there are no other babies in the family. I am the mother of the family on the East Coast, and that is a big deal. It's at the office too, I'm the mother of us all in terms of being the senior mother . . . there is the feeling that I have an experience that other people can value.

   My husband, when we were discussing whether we should have kids, said, 'You must have kids to be truly professional'. I said, 'What do you mean?' 'Well, anyone can be the Secretary of the corporation, not anybody can have kids and do that, they will look at you as a real woman.' I hate the idea, but in a lot of ways I think he is right. Being a mother makes me seem to other people a more rounded person than you can be if you're just a professional.

   Somehow in my own psyche is the need for a family; I grew up in a strong family . . . I have the emotional need to have a family, and it was very important to me. It makes me independent from my other family. It makes my husband my

family . . . now we are a family, and that's wonderful to me.

On the other hand, there is also the way of looking at it that before I never knew what was important in life. Should I spend the weekend on a hobby? I couldn't get my priorities . . . I didn't know what I wanted to do or what I wanted to be. Now I know what I am; there is no question about what my priorities are. While all the other is secondary to that, they sort of line up in a natural order . . . I know who I am, what I'm going to be. I'm a grown up.

The satisfactions of work are many and varied . . . a job well done, recognition from people that you are doing the job, taking a problem and solving it, I love that . . . even taking something you don't want to do and think you can't do and grinding it through. Now I've gotten to the point, and I've worked long enough so that I really feel that I do that well. When I see a problem, my heart sinks because I think, 'Oh, can I deal with that?' I say to myself, 'Well, you've dealt with this before and you will again.' It becomes fairly routine almost, confidence and then satisfaction."

2. " . . . I can't remember a time when I didn't enjoy learning both skills and competencies and enjoyed imparting some and sharing with the people who knew more or who knew as much or who are not quite so far along either chronologically or in their thought processes . . . day to day imparting skills. They may be just aspects of the craft of how to make every minute count, of not allowing yourself to treat anything as unimportant because it's the sum of all the various small unimportant things which add up to doing a good job. That sort of Shaker attitude that if you treat every task as worthy of striving for perfection, then you may never reach perfection but you do a heck of a lot better job than if you don't have that inward striving."

The respondents all like the sense that they are in control, that they can make a difference and that what they do does make a difference. Three descriptions of this sense of reward are:

1. "Clearly in doing something well, being able to say 'I did that well'. Especially if it's a particular kind of thing that I like to do well. It's a situation where you can put a couple of things together and say, witnesses in a situation or problems and let them solve themselves.

Putting things together so that they can work that way. I think it's very easy to look at a situation and say, 'It should be this way,' it's getting it to be that way that is exciting. On the other hand, you can overlook the situation and see problem areas that complement each other. You can put them together; I like that very much."

2. "Oh, sure, feelings of growth, of accomplishment, of getting to know myself better, spending time alone with myself, just becoming aware of who I am and what my feelings are. A lot of times I can appreciate even the bad experiences, because they put me in touch with myself in a way that I never knew before, just in terms of my reactions and how I deal with a situation. I think those are good too, and I think that I'm learning that even though I might encounter a couple of bad experiences along the way, I won't encounter more, that there are always positive things you have to realize the good things that come of those bad experiences and make them work for you."

3. " . . . some days I say to myself that I can't believe that I'm so happy, and I've so much to do. I've got all these interests, and I've got so much to prove. Other days, well you know how it is. You get down. Two jobs you wanted, you aren't going to get; face up to the fact they are never going to hire a woman president. Everybody is crazy, and they are all out for themselves. It's up and down that way, but I would say in general, it is a tremendous feeling of what a great life! If I ended it tomorrow, I did what I wanted to, and I had the best . . . I'd say I've done pretty much what I wanted."

When the respondents were asked to discuss the ways in which they integrated their multiple roles, personal and professional lives, they were much less flamboyant than their counterparts in the group interviews. They were serious and the responses ranged from thoughtful inventories of the strategies used, almost as if there had not been much conscious cataloguing of this area before, to painstaking descriptions of the way in which multiple tasks were accomplished. There are two over-riding characteristics of the group which must be recognized; their ability to organize their lives, families and job; their ability to establish priorities to determine what is important and when. This latter characteristic seems to evolve over time, and we noted that the respondents in Groups II and III discussed their increasing ability to set priorities as they and their families grew older. Some of the following strategies are what has enabled these women to successfully undertake multiple roles and responsibilities.

1. " . . . you always have a list either in your pocket or in your head of things that should be taken care of."

   " . . . service for dishwashers and all that kind of stuff . . . if you get the man . . . to show you how, you can do that too . . . the washing machine man . . . showed me what to do next . . . the disposal man, I asked him to teach me, and he did. It's easier to be a mechanic than to stand around waiting for them to show up. There's a great sense of pride in fixing those things which I think is very funny. I really don't need it. I need it like a hole in the head. I changed my first tire the other day, because I couldn't get anyone to come and do it. I was really angry but it only took 20 minutes. I felt foolish that I hadn't tried it before."

2. "I get up at 5:00 in the morning for a variety of reasons. That is my time; it is also the time I am extremely organized and I would have to be even if I were not organized because I don't function well in clutter. I'm always thinking, probably from when I wake up to the time I go to sleep. I operate on many levels so that's one way that I do the nitty-gritty."

3. "I try to set aside a day a week for my research. That doesn't happen very often . . . college is an ideal setting for women with multiple roles; it couldn't be better. The 9 to 5 routine is not as good though the three to five hours of teaching is draining. So I've taken up the piano again, in the evening, I play the piano. It's been fun taking up the piano after 25 years . . . my youngest decided that she was not interested in taking piano lessons any more, so I took over her time."

4. "I happen to be one of the women who is not married to an academician. I have always felt that was great, separating the two. First of all, it is difficult for any man to live with me; if that man had to compete in the same field, it would be tragic. I don't think it would work . . . I've combined my professional life with my friendships so that invariably in any setting that I was in professionally I picked up new friends, dropped old ones, and that became my professional life and selectively my social life . . . my professional life doesn't spill over into my personal life but reinforces the other in the social network . . ."

5. "It's something that does not come overnight. One develops it by building into more and more complex roles. I suppose

that there are a number of strategies that I use, probably most important is to constantly keep a set of priorities in front of me. Those are both long term, in terms of what I'm trying to accomplish in the institution overall, and short term from day to day. I'm very rough on myself in terms of spending too much time on the wrong priority; I analyze my activities almost every day to insure that I haven't spent a disproportionate amount of time on the wrong kind of issues. Another thing for me as an administrator, it's critical that I be pro-active instead of just reactive. It's very easy in my role to simply respond to stimuli and not even to crisis but to be a passive respondent to the forces that impinge on you. I am also extremely critcial of myself in terms of looking ahead and doing something that initiates rather than responds."

6. "I guess it really boils down that I try to find time for myself to be able to plot out all of the things I know I have to do and to sort. A lot of times, I sit down and write them down and try to put things in perspective; what are the priorities for whatever I have to do. I don't always follow through with all that, but I think that's really helpful. I seek an awful lot of help from friends, parents, my children. My son is 12 now, and he can understand a lot of things that I'm going through. So I do both things, do a lot of thinking for myself as well as bounce whatever it is I'm thinking off friends and relatives."

7. "I do have one technique I suppose I learned which is that I can in fact throw off what I do at work sometimes, not all the time by any means. But, really I can have a drink and sort of forget. I don't know whether that's integrating it or not, and I'm not sure that's a principle either."

8. "First of all, you must have cooperation which I have; in my family I do have cooperation. I also know that they need breathing space, so where I can involve them, I do and where I can't, it's hands off. My husband does not see himself as prince consort; we have separate worlds . . . I think having household help, good, bad, indifferent, having someone to take over, to take over those chores which you cannot do . . . there are certain times that I will block off when family things have to be done. My secretary has to be keenly aware of what this is . . . she . . . puts down evenings when I must be at the college at a certain time; she also sees that there are evenings blocked off which she cannot use . . . The family has to be part of the job, and they have to know what you're about."

9. " . . . a second strategy . . . it's to push A. (husband) into areas which he at first didn't feel comfortable in, and didn't see as his lot. He still looks back to the healthier days before I woke up, and that's an on-going strategy, 'You'll have to do this and take the children to the dentist.' I take the major responsibility for keeping track of things but I also call upon him in a way that tried to push him to see it as not only inevitable but just that he take on certain responsibilities, so far, so good."

10. "I have three major roles, one is that I'm a mother, second is that I'm married to R., and third is that I have the job here and I do just absolutely nothing else. I clean house as little as possible. We never entertain. We very rarely go out."

11. "The same way a porcupine makes love, carefully."

12. " . . . sometimes the kids come by the office to do some things. I do a lot of talking on the phone. My kids call me when they come home from school so that I have a sense of where everybody is. We go out to eat a lot because I don't want to cook or I have to go to a meeting."

13. " . . . heavy planning and happily, a great deal of energy . . . I have learned to lie down and in eight minutes be so far out, then in eight minutes be up and at it again. It's the most lovely lesson, if men could learn to do that, we'd all live longer; it's just a wonderful thing to be able to do . . . humor helps when you are dealing with . . . a lot of the problems we've had."

14. "I have a little secret about how I always was able to work. I always lived very close to where I worked . . . I went back to work when my daughter was a month old, but I lived . . . in the neighborhood so I would see her in the morning . . . I traded off by not having a very rich social life at night . . . but we have a social life on Friday and Saturday nights. We have a house in the country in Connecticut, and we go there usually on Friday night. My husband likes that; I would be just as happy to stay in New York, but that's my concession to being married. He likes it and feels that if he gets me away from my work area, I'll work less, which is true. So I do that."

15. "On the job, I've been able to spin off some of those roles onto other people, either staff or other administrators. It's

more because the type of job I do allows me to make other people responsible, at least morally, for certain things. . . . I also exploit my colleagues who happen to work on my floor."

As shown above, the strategies which these women have developed are serious, thoughtful, pragmatic and adapted to their needs. The techniques vary with their age and the intensity of their responsibilities; they have developed them with the cooperation and assistance of others since the respondents do not work or perceive themselves to be working in a vacuum. They are very much involved with people, at work and in their personal lives, and their strategies reflect that very important aspect of their lives and persons.

If then, they are so involved with other people, they must have perceptions of the ways in which those people view them. We wanted to find out how they related to men, women colleagues, how younger women viewed them. We wanted to know if their perceptions of others was unaffected, somewhat paranoid, anxious or if they were confident enough in their own abilities and destinies to be unaffected by others. Was their work and non-work life marred by sniping, back-biting and controversy? Were they beset by unhappy relationships at home and in the office? We began by asking them to talk about the ways in which men viewed them.

Most of the women described men's perceptions of them in one of three styles, acceptance, threatening or as an oddity; however, there were some women who felt that they had too little information or experience to really comment. An articulate description of relationships to men was made by a young woman:

"I . . . deal . . . almost exclusively with men, and I find a kind of acceptance of me now that I have children and didn't exist before. They know where I stand, who I am. If you know someone is married, you don't know a lot about what that relationship is, is it an old-fashioned relationship? Is it new fangled? Are they on the verge of divorce, or is it a terrific marriage. If you've got kids, you've made a decision both about your marriage and about what you value. Some of that I suspect is a matter of some superiority; you're pretty vulnerable when you've got kids and a job. People know what you are going through; they may feel a little superior to you which makes it easier to relate to you. They know where you stand; you aren't a radical feminist, so they really know how to come at you."

A single woman described the ways in which men perceive and work with her:

> " . . . I do believe that the basic response to me is, from me, and I do mean the basic, the majority response is probably to treat me as a sexual neutral . . . in part this is my own doing, in dress, naughty language, haircut and the whole thing. I am probably more comfortable with the opposite sex in a professional role or in a social role where I am not going to run into a proposition . . . when I go to conferences for my professional discipline, I'm usually propositioned three or four times. Particularly in the early 70's that was a big thing. They had bets on whether they could take Miss Feminist over to bed, could they lay women's lib? I really don't like that, perhaps I can't think of anything off the top of my head that I dislike more. I try to go out of my way to communicate an efficient, business like person . . .
>
> I think that men basically respond to me in terms of the job I'm doing. Certainly in the environment at work and as men get to know me . . . they find me a very interesting companion for lunch or something because they can talk to me about things . . . that they can't talk to other people about . . . The answer then is that in work they either respond to me professionally as a professional person and in a non-professional environment, where there's no work going on, they might treat me more like a sister or good friend."

As far as being a threat, one woman had this to say:

> "Men, I think, see me as a very monolithic, strong person that sort of does all of these things, that wakes up in the morning and eats three men live for breakfast."

A Black woman voiced a common concern of Black educated women:

> "They are frightened of me which has disturbed me to no end. That's back to that Superwoman things. I have been out with men older than myself, younger . . . and my own age, and for some reason every single time, I have to listen to how independent you are, how self-assured you are, how you don't really need anybody. And I'm saying to myself . . . but there is still part of me that needs something else . . . maybe I want to always seem self-assured and very independent . . . When I found out that I got in Harvard, and a friend called me . . . I told him I had gotten into Harvard, and he said, 'Great, I knew you were going to do it. I'm going to tell you something but don't be angry with me. You

> frighten men already now; once you get a Harvard degree, you will have outspaced yourself. Black men will probably not deal with you' . . . I like being me, and I'm not going to change me to make certain somebody else think I'm nice and acceptable for me . . . I'm not about to change me."

Being viewed as an oddity seems to occur for women in Groups II and III which means that the younger people function in settings which accepts women who work and have multiple roles as a normal part of life. One of the women in Group II had this comment to make:

> "Well, let me tell you about my husband's friends who are probably always giving my husband a hard time for having a wife, allowing his wife to do such things, to get involved out of the home, not be cooking and so forth. Some of them are absolutely appalled at that. The men I work with, it's interesting . . . Others perhaps view me as sort of patronizing, 'Isn't it wonderful you are able to do all these things, dear.'"

One woman in Group III had an interesting observation:

> ". . . Young men have the greatest difficulty . . . I'd say it's young men over whom I have some authority who have the trouble. If they graduated, if they got their higher degree some time in the 60's, they have trouble with authority in general."

It was interesting to note that our respondents tended to be associated with women who have many of the same interests and life styles; even though they may have been the first "on the block" to return to work, graduate school or continue a career uninterrupted by family commitments, they now associate with professional women and men who share the same assumptions and patterns. Their women associates and friends tend to provide a source of support and help, sometimes inspiration. They help constitute a network of information; they maintain relationships with mentors, early associates who were helpful to them. There was very little talk of women associates as competitors, or they may be unaware of this as a problem in their professional lives. There is a genuine sense of enjoying the company and support of other women, of attempting to help women, of feeling a concern that there is a sense of "sisterhood" which they share, of a sense of relief that there are more women involved in professional careers which may make their lives easier. None of the women discussed women's groups as taking high priorities in their lives since most of their

energies are devoted to the tasks at hand, the responsibilities of their daily existence.

Since a great many of our respondents work with younger women and are involved in educational activities which prepare young women for professional lives, we wanted to know more about the impact of their life styles on those young women. One woman with a very high level university position answered:

1. I would guess that about 20% (of the women students) think that they won't marry and/or have kids. They are just uninterested and that the rest think they will probably have kids one day and are really glad that somebody does and likes them. I'm asked by students fairly frequently to talk about all of this. I suppose they view it with relief. I'm sure that my two daughters . . . view it with relief. They clearly like children a lot, and they are clearly career bound, for them it would be just a very poignant sense of loss to give up either."

2. "I suppose I discover every now and then that I have fans among younger women which I try not to think about a lot because I don't want to feel I'm playing to fans or feel that I've disappointed them at times. I don't know what their expectations are, but every now and then I realize they are out there. We were at a restaurant a couple of weeks ago, and there were some former students sitting at the next table. One of them got up and said hello, then a few minutes later, a whisper went around the table, 'That's _____'. I told B. that I can't leave Harvard Square, because it's the only place where I am a celebrity . . . I guess that's another one of the rewards, but I don't want to be burdened by their expectations. I need to separate my destiny from what they view as my destiny. I don't want to put too much into what offers as an example, as a mentor . . . trying to find out who we are, what we did and how we go about."

3. "I'm in a somewhat unusual position in that I was the first woman bureau director in the Department so that other women have come to me in terms of advice, not necessarily younger women but in terms of career development and in terms of friendship, support, networking, whatever . . . younger women have, I think, looked up to me. Certainly for the first few years that I was in this position, I had women, certainly younger women, coming out of the woodwork to come and talk to me about how one gets into administration. I think

> it's by luck. I think that certainly the women on my staff look to me as someone that they can rely on. Someone who will always be there. I think over the last couple of years, I've been able to develop people to the extent that I've let them assume a lot more responsibility or they have developed so they can assume much more responsibility. . . . I think one of the most interesting things that young staff people have when they come on is that they learn the fact that not only are we fighting a battle for kids, but we are also fighting a battle within the agency and the school systems to make ourselves respectable, supportive and financially viable. That's turned a lot of heads around which has been kind of exciting and heart warming."

So, these super active, self-confident women are aware of and feel responsible for younger women, they are attempting to explain the ways in which they conduct their lives so that younger women will not be fearful of the same types of activities, and attempts at self-fulfillment.

Now that we have reviewed the responses of the group to our questions, the next chapter will summarize the meanings, compare the groups and individual responses and attitudes and discuss the implications of the study for public policy and American society.

V. SUMMARY

Profile of the Sample

This unique sample of professional women, 68 in all, are probably not unique when placed in the context of their peers; they held no pretense that they were special or set apart in any way from those other women who work in their organizations. They are unique only in that they were included in this definitional study of the Superwoman.

The women had more advanced degrees than is the norm for professional women since only 18.7% of American women had completed four years of college; the reason that our sample has such a high level of educational attainment is that we concentrated on administrators in higher education where the doctorate is often the minimal requirement for a job. Of those who completed our group and individual interview form, two holders of law degrees, 83 with Master's degrees, 60 with doctoral degrees. Even the seventeen women employed outside higher education had a high level of educational attainment with two lawyers, four Ph.D.'s and five Masters' degrees.

The respondents have positions which range from beginning professional to top executive. However, the number of years in which the women have held their positions is small enough to create concern. The average number of years of service in the same position is 2.9 for both individual and group respondents though one woman had 38 years with one company. It may be that the group has benefited from Affirmative Action programs or that they represent a level of mobility which might not be generally characteristic of professional women. This length of job tenure is exaggerated because of the large number of Black women represented in the study; they repeat the traditional pattern, fewer years on the job, lower level of responsibility and lower salaries than the Caucasian women.

The beginning levels of employment tend to be those related to the delivery of services, and it is at that level that the Black women are clustered. They are involved with work with students in counseling programs and primarily with minority students. It may be that these women are examples of the pull toward stereotypic occupations and the lower mobility aspirations found in several studies (Allen, 1979). Those Caucasian women at the entry levels tend to be also involved with students, but the bulk of our sample were in the administrative areas of business and academic programs.

We were able to find few Black women who were in positions with substantive responsibilities for entire departments, campuses, or businesses; this in itself is not surprising since there are few Black women who hold such positions. The other obvious factor is that the salary levels of the Black women are lower since it is also consistent with the length of service, and educational attainment in the organization. The average salary of the Black women in the group interviews was $17,033 while that of the Caucasian women was $20,733, and of the 25 Black women in the individual interview segment, only one had a salary over $40,000. Several of the Caucasians had incomes well over $75,000 a year; they were all women who were employed in the corporate or private organizations. It is this latter group which raises the average annual income of the individual interviewees to $40,900 while the average of all interviewees, group and individual is $22,866. These income figures far exceed the $10,357 median income of college educated women workers (U.S. Census Bureau), so in this respect, our sample is unique and not representative of the college educated women in the workforce.

A great number of the Black women respondents had attended traditionally Black colleges for their first degree and were of Southern origin. A larger number of the Caucasian women had attended selective private institutions or co-educational universities, particularly true of the advanced degree holders. The Black women tended to obtain graduate degrees related to education or counseling which may be an indication that the graduate work was combined with their work activities or closely related. It may also be an indicator of a serious commitment to their area of responsibility and future plans for continuation of careers in that area.

One of the most interesting findings of the study was that when we removed the women from their peers and the group setting, many of the racial differences disappeared. Many of their perceptions, ideas, strategies, background ideologies, relationship to family indicated more similarities than dissimilarities. It may well be that professional women, regardless of income, racial origin, or nature of job position are very much alike because of the conditions which created them and the type of lives which they lead. This was not true when the women were together in a group interview, because the racial differences and origins were highlighted; this was particularly the case with the Black women who used the group setting as an opportunity to examine their oppression. The Caucasian women did not discuss race but placed men in the same context that the Black women placed Caucasians. The individual interview mitigated many of these complaints, societally based.

The individual interviews provided the greatest source of information about the ways in which professional women behave, think, have developed and what they value. Because of this, the findings from those individual interviews will be used for reference more than the information from the group sessions. Our interest in the development of professional women was one which was best answered by specific data generated by the individuals; the responses given in the group sessions were more general and thus gave us a sense of the background or milieu in which multiple roles are learned or established. We discovered that there was a great similarity in that the women recalled that they began their activities in elementary school or by high school. They were nurtured by families which encouraged them to be active or if not encouraged, they were not discouraged from taking on leadership roles in school, church, community organizations, or self-generated activities. Many of the respondents talked of emulating parents who were themselves busy and involved with multiple roles and activities.

The respondents showed a pattern of activities which can be characterized by a type of cooperation, team effort, creativity and concentration which also contribute to the development of leadership characteristics. The women remember that they participated in athletics, so one might assume that the usual pattern for females, until recently, were team sports such as volleyball, basketball, softball, field hocky, soccer, gymnastics, swimming and tennis. These activities not only require cooperation and learning to work well with others but they require competition so that these women acquired a desire to win and how to accomplish this with the assistance of others.

Music, either done alone or with a group, requires discipline and concentration in order to produce harmony and pleasant results. This too contributes to the leadership qualities needed to move into positions of responsibility in the larger world. This would also be a positive quality of their participation in youth organizations, religious groups, student government or political organizations, and many of the women remembered being active from their days in the Brownies. This latter category would not only provide experiences in cooperation, perhaps some elements of competition but experiences in planning programs, developing strategies to accomplish tasks, and learning to accommodate to the interests of other people.

We would suggest that there be some reanalysis of the lives of successful women and an examination of this factor, because we feel that it has been underemphasized and devalued. Women, based on our small study, do have similar experiences to those of men, but they have not emphasized those experiences and used

them as mental springboards to other activities. The women in our sample did not place any particular stress on the activities mentioned above; they were just facts of their lives and were not considered to be of any particular consequence, and many popular feminist writers have supported this misconception (Hennig & Jardin, 1977). We suggest that there be a re-examination and re-evaluation of the role of sports, music, organizational membership in the lives and development of girls and women since they contribute to the confidence needed to take on tasks and responsibilities of a wide variety.

We discovered to our surprise that school played a negligible role in the encouragement of the respondents; their families were much more important in helping them learn to handle multiple responsibilities. In a few instances, approximately five, teachers or schools created the environment or expectation that the girl students would be actively involved; only two of those instances were in public schools and co-ed settings. Parents, grandparents, aunts were the outstanding influence on our respondents, either by example, verbal encouragement and active support. These women, when young, were given the support which allowed them to experiment, move away from the hearth and home, and to give free range to their interests and talents. One can assume from their educational attainment, that the respondents were successful academically and enjoyed that success; the initial expectations came from their family environment and was internalized so that they talk freely of expectations and standards which they set for themselves. Perhaps, it is appropriate that the school not set the initial expectation and that they come from the family; then the school people must be clear that this is not a responsibility which belongs to them or should be taken away from the family. However, the schools should encourage girls to take on responsibilities and activities of a varied nature so that they have the experiences which will help them assume leadership responsibilities after they have finished school.

These women are feminists but do not all identify themselves as such. In fact, a few of the women verbally disclaimed being feminists but expressed their compatibility with the goals and aspirations of the feminist movement. It may be that they do not see themselves as feminist in the media sense which may be a fault of the movement in that it has not been able to communicate the philosophical meanings of the movement so that women acting on its principles can identify in a more open manner. For the most part, the women do not seem to express an ideology other than that of traditional American, a belief in hard work and the importance of work in one's life, the value of the family and of children, the importance of supportive relationships with other people

(husbands, family friends), being well-rounded and having outlets for the expression of their feelings, seeking adventure and new experiences, making a positive contribution, setting and striving to fulfill goals, having a sense of continual personal growth and development, having a sense of control over the environment and one's own destiny. In a sense, these are the cliches which have appeared from generation to generation in our society, but they are the cliches which have meaning for the women in the sample for they might be characterized as autonomous inner directed (Riesman, et al., 1953). We may assume that rather than cliches which are mounted with meaning, the values listed above are ones which have guided our sample and which have been operational as they progressed through school into professional life. We may conclude that they, Black, Asian-American and Caucasian were raised with and have been inculcated with these same basic American values and that they in turn are transmitting those values to their children and to the young people with whom they work.

Definition and Hypothesis

We set out to accomplish two things in this study: primarily to test the hypothesis that the accumulation of roles women take on as life alternatives increase constitute a barrier to their occupational success, and secondarily to develop a definition of the Superwoman as defined by professional women with multiple roles. We set out to determine if professional women felt that they were suffering, were inhibited from positions of leadership because of multiple roles.

In the process of examining our hypothesis, we derived a definition of the Superwoman: a woman with considerable ego strength, self-confidence who successfully maintains many roles, achieves balance in her life, is poised, socially responsible and can do anything which is necessary. She, then, is not a woman with superhuman abilities but has the attributes of a real woman, in fact, she is very much like the woman who has chosen a professional career along with a family or other responsibilities. The Superwoman is not necessarily a wife and mother but that is the image which tends to be projected most often because family responsibilities entail more roles and tasks than are usually assumed by single women.

The definition has some negative connotations but they tended to be overridden by the positive ones. The discussion of the causes of stresses and strains was more important than the discussion of the negative aspects of the definition because it related more to the life situations of the women in the study.

The definition changed with the ages of the women being interviewed, from skepticism and interest, to identification, to amusement and disinterest. We found that there are interesting aspects of women's lifes which unfold as their lives progress and that there are rather clearly defined stages which could be determined from their responses. The changes in their lives evolve over time in addition to the perspectives gained from work, the aging process and experiences of coping with multiple responsibilities. Hall (1972) and O'Leary (1974) found that women's conflicts and pressures were lessened with the maturity of their respondents.

Our primary purpose then was to explore the quality of professional women's lives, to determine the extent to which they were suffering from role-overload, role-strain and lack of opportunity. We began with the hypothesis that women were being prevented from career mobility because they had too many responsibilities, and unlike men, could not devote themselves singlemindedly to their careers. Much of our thinking had been influenced by the media portrayal of the conflicts experienced by professional women and by our participation in consciousness raising group with women colleagues in higher education administration. Many of the meetings focused on the toll being extracted by having to be too many persons and having to do too many tasks, in contrast to male co-workers who had far fewer responsibilities; the common complaint heard at these meetings was, "I need a wife." Since there was seldom an opposing opinion voiced while the feelings of resentment were shared, we were convinced that we would find ample substantiation for our hypothesis.

As the study progressed and our group and individual interviews took place, we found that our respondents were not expressing the sentiments which we had expected to hear. The group responses generally geban on a negative tone but began to display positive opinions as the discussions moved past the initial stage. The women were pleased with their abilities to handle multiple responsibilities, expressed self-confidence and could explicitly describe the satisfactions which were derived from having multiple roles and responsibilities.

To our surprise, we found that the professional women in our study did not feel that they were suffering or were the victims of role overload or role strain. They turned out to be a group confident of their own abilities, capable of much more responsibility than they have been given. The women were not placidly content but pleased with the challenge presented by their families their careers and other responsibilities. They did not talk in terms of distress caused by being unable to move forward since they did not perceive it as a problem facing; they did recognize the problem of being thwarted by societal factors, but this was not

sufficient to defeat or discourage them. They were self-confident enough that the social environment does not deter them from activities and careers which they consider to be fulfilling. Even when the respondents were not totally satisfied with their jobs, they did not express the intense distress which we expected. It may be that these women are capable of generating enough activities within their work setting and outside that they guarantee that they are not bored; this was a continual regrain and answer to the query of the satisfactions and rewards of multiple roles. They do not like being bored and equate it with stagnation or lack of growth. Our respondents like continual movement and activity, want to be in the midst of that movement and where there is meaning for them. Our hypothesis was blown to bits because our respondents did not believe that they were being oppressed or repressed or that their destinies were being denied. This would tend to confirm Stein and Bailey's (1973) findings that role conflict may be reduced by emphasis on career achievement.

We found the responses of the group interviewees was much more stereotyped and negative than that of the individual interviewees, and we speculate that the group situation imposes a level of conformity which demands that the participatns stay within safe parameters and do not stray too far from the group. The responses were more conforming in that they first harkened to the media images and only slowly began to unfold a more radical perception. The differences, particularly those of race and rank, were accentuated within the context of the group, and this was a marked contrast to the individual interviews. It may well be that the group sessions seemed more in keeping with the consciousness raising sessions in which women attempt to explore the problems facing them and offer support to one another. They then parade their indignities and their perceived abuses so that they can then offer succor to one another. It would seem that as long as the Black woman are excluded within the context of the organization, the single racial group setting offers them the only outlet available and at the same time accentuates the differences and inequalities. It is perhaps because of this clear cleavage that the Black women placed the refuge of the family in sharper detail than the Caucasian women could or did. They needed to express their hurt and pain in relation to a group which could and does provide santuary.

The development of a woman's coping skills became evident as we separated out the responses of the individual women by age cohorts. The older women had experienced the thorny discomfort of raising families, starting and escalating careers while they developed strategies which allowed them to operate on several fronts at one time. They all spoke of the evolution of priority setting and the ability to distinguish between those things which were of lesser importance. We think that more attention should

be paid to the wisdom which accrues to women as they move through the stages of contending with multiple responsibilities.

We think that the women who come together in groups should not be granted the "luxury of griping" since this may be counter-productive for the participants. Women should be brought together for skill building sessions which will enhance their relationships within their work setting. As long as they are isolated from men and many of the women who are employed within their organizations, they will sit around and count the ways in which they have been maligned. They need to begin to develop skills or avenues which will provide them with increased mobility. They already have the motivation and perhaps are casting around for vehicles which will be helpful in that process. Women's groups can then move them to another level; consciousness raising is best used with those people who are just beginning to understand that there is a existing problem but do not know where the problem is located.

Public Policy Implications

Education and the school curriculum needs to be redefined so that the emphasis is not just on vocational education and non-traditional careers for women, but the focus of all of education should be related to the reality that all of the population needs to be educated to be productive people. It is not sufficient to introduce females to the world of work as if it will be a temporary measure until they are married and retire from the labor market. This approach is not consistent with the continual increase in the number of women in that labor market; there needs to be recognition that women will leave and return in much the same way that men have done during periods of national emergencies. Women will alternate work periods with family obligations, but this is an option which should also be available to men.

The schools and youth serving agencies should place more emphasis on the inclusion of female students in activities which foster team/group cooperation along with competition. As discussed earlier, programs of this nature will help women develop the skills which are helpful to career advancement and leadership. These may be athletic in nature or extra-curricular or built into the regular academic program. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of encouraging girls to assume all roles in these activities and not just the support roles as is often the case.

There should be greater emphasis and discussion of the importance of child care programs to support young families. The present situation creates unnecessary stress for both men and women

and on the organizations which employ them; if the care arrangements are slip-shod and tenuous without adequate provision for emergencies, the employee's performance and attendance will be hampered, thus affecting the performance of the organization. The area of child care cannot be left to individual initiative or local option but must have the support of the Federal Government and the infusion of Federal and State monies to make it viable. The discussions must not just be concerned with providing facilities and/or staffing but must include the more important area of program/curriculum for pre-school children. The nature of those programs and the emphasis: preparation for school; bi-cultural/bi-lingual maintenance; socialization; introduction to the larger world; androgynous activities. There needs to be thinking on a national level because it is crucially important; our younger respondents and their peers are being faced with a problem which they should not have to place as a major factor in deciding their futures, care of young children. There are young women who are deciding that it is more self-fulfilling and satisfying to have a career than to attempt to handle children and the attendant responsibilities. This is an unfair burden to place on young people, and it would seem to be a public responsibility to begin to address that problem and remove the burden.

There should be public policy which encourages women to be moved into administrative positions; public agencies have taken the lead in hiring on an affirmative basis, but greater efforts need to be taken to recruit and promote women into positions of leadership. It is only when this is done in the public sector that the private sector will be cajoled or coerced into following the lead. There should be a loosening up of attitudes so that women are given choices to decide if they want to move into administrative positions rather than having those decisions made for them. Organizations must begin to include women in career planning early in their entry in the organization and providing the same types of career development programs as available for men. There are some women who will not opt to be in a management training track, but there will be many more who will choose that option. As Kanter notes, this will provide organizations with a tremendous potential and reservoir of talent which can strengthen the organization (Kanter, 1977). Women can handle administrative positions since they, like our sample, have had early training in doing so and can manage to do multiple tasks with ease and delight.

Public and private funding organizations must begin to look at the ways in which working women on many occupational levels handle work and home responsibilities; there is much that can be learned from adapting their methods and strategies. It may well be that those women on the welfare roles do not have the knowledge

and ability to handle more than one primary responsibility but with assistance and training they might be helped to move into the workforce. The world of work is frightening, and there are many women in low paying jobs who manage to take care of work and families, often alone. We could learn from the strategies which they have developed. Many of these women would be the direct beneficiaries of child care programs. Research on the ways in which women on all levels perceive and manage multiple roles might also be useful in the education and socialization of men if we are concerned about helping men and women adapt more flexible attitudes and methods of living in a less sex stereotyped world.

In addition, there needs to be more intense public discussion of the ways in which women live and work, because most men are unaware of the implications and the values of multiple roles. This would not only increase consciousness but would heighten the sensitivities to the talents which many women possess, skills which are transferable and which could be valuable to many organizations. This means that a frontal attack should be launched to make the media understand and interpret correctly what women with multiple roles are doing and how they feel aobut their lives. The media have a responsibility to present women from the women's view about, and if need be, public monies should be expended on programs which would accomplish this.

Lastly but very importantly, the public agencies and women's organizations must exert more energy in their efforts to include Black women and to involve them in the higher levels of administration. There should be recruitment and training programs, Black women must be moved out of direct service ghettos and into some of the more substantive areas of management. They must not be confined to providing service to minority clients but must have opportunities to learn more about the entire organization. They must be recruited into the private sector and given opportunities in training programs so that they can move into the mainstream of administrative activity; it is not sufficient to have Black women in an organization if they are grouped in the support services and have little opportunity to move ahead. Caucasian women must make efforts to reach out to Black women and end their isolation; they should be mutual supporters and not adversaries.

Our hypothesis was disproved because we found a group of happy, busy, self-directed, motivated women who feel that they have control of their lives and can tackle innumerable tasks, all in the course of an ordinary day. We are not sure that we would call our respondents Superwomen but feel that they are certainly representative of what we would call the Super American Woman.

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